

## **Walter Benjamins Concept of Anthropological Materialism as critique of Soviet Marxism in his Essay Moscow (1926/27)**

**Caroline Adler (M.A. Cultural History and Theory (HU Berlin))**

There is one thing for sure the negative: My presentation (Darstellung) will be void of theory. Walter Benjamin wrote to the Jewish philosopher Martin Buber in 1927. By presentation Benjamin alludes to his essay Moscow, which had been commissioned by Buber for his ecumenical German Journal Die Kreatur (The Creature) and was published in 1927. Walter Benjamin himself had spent almost three winter months before in the new Russian capital, that was marked by the political unrest and aftermath of Lenin's death few years prior. Benjamins Moscow experiences have been documented in his Moscow Diary, which gained posthumous academic fame. Whereas the diary seems to give intimate insights into Benjamins life in Moscow, the essay Moscow (to which the diary serves as source material) clearly lacks all those personal details, particularly his discussion of contemporary Russian literature and his thoughts of joining the KPD and for this has never gained the wide reception the diary did. This is most notably due to the apparent theoretical void, which has been recognized by Benjamin as constitutive method to his essay in his letter to Buber. However, the theoretical emptying of the Moscow essay does not signify the absence of theory and political positioning within the text. Rather, it points to Benjamins attempt of absorbing deductive abstraction, prognosis, in certain regard all judgement within a certain method of presentation, that gives favour to the optical, tactical and phonetical phenomena of the metropolis, which, at that time, resembled a laboratory of modernity. The decision upon the succeeding of this experiment relies, in Benjamins eyes, not upon the spectator (as in the Romantic concept of experiment) but the concreteness/presence of the material itself. This paper aims at recognizing the Moscow essay in its unwieldy form as an experiment in Benjamins attempt of absorbing the theoretical and conceptual within a presentation of phenomena a method of presentation (Darstellung) he finds in Goethe delicate empiricism (zarte Empirie) and opposes with his concept he will later call Anthropological Materialism where sensible experience cannot be thought independently from its historical and cultural contingency and mediation. In this light, the essay Moscow and its theoretical void is not only a formal experiment in literary method, but through its method presents a critique of Marxism in his (specifically Soviet) orientation towards exclusively economical and scientific discourse.

## **The Meaning of Wahhabism: Origins, Afterlives and Alternative Explanations**

**Safia Albaiti (New York University)**

Explanations for the continued staying power of Saudi Arabias monarchical and anti-democratic regime, well after other monarchs in Egypt, Iraq and Iran were overthrown have largely oriented around three main reasons: the curse of its oil reserves, its historic alliance with the United States, and the particularly reactionary conservatism of its clerical class. In this narrative, oil bought the ruling family social peace and allowed it to pacify any challenge to its authority, and its alliance with the United States has protected it and enabled it to export its reactionary and repressive form of Islam abroad to challenge liberal and left-wing organizations and politics around the world. Although oil prices have declined

over several years, forcing Saudi Arabia to enact greater austerity measures on its population, it is the last argument about the power of ideology that has gained ground more recently among leftists and Marxists, seeking to understand the rise of the Islamic State, and the aftermath of the Syrian counterrevolution. In this last account, Islam, in its extremely intolerant and puritan Wahhabi variant, maintains the regimes survival, while contending for influence elsewhere in the region and the world, in order to just as effectively be used to destroy revolutionary possibilities elsewhere. But does the argument for the power of Wahhabist reaction possess the kind of analytical value conferred upon it for understanding the unique features of Saudi society? This culturalist reading repeats conventional historiographical narratives of the formation of the modern Saudi state, and mirrors, rather than challenges, the dominant mystification of Saudi Arabia. This paper will survey recent historical literature on the formation of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, in the political economy of the Najd province, the fiscal changes in revenue extraction that allowed for a shift to expansionary wars, the political alliances that led to the disappearance of the vibrant presses and political parties and associations that had existed in the Hijaz province prior to its conquest and incorporation into the Saudi state and that could have portended a different future, the alliance of the new state with the British and then the United States, and the history of the indigenous Saudi working class in the history of the labor force of the Arabian American Oil Company (Aramco). Wahhabism did not prevent a layer of Saudi students, workers and professionals in the state bureaucracy from being influenced by and supporting pan-Arab nationalism and socialism in the fifties and sixties, it is unable to quell domestic opposition, unrest and discontent, and this paper argues that the disappearance of a native working class from the realm of Saudi life is the greater material barrier to demands for greater democracy in that society, and not predominantly the influence of Islam. These two approaches in fact signify diverging strategic implications for challenging the role of Saudi Arabia in the counter-revolution.

## **Hungary 1956, Lessons of a Forgotten Revolution**

### **Philippe Alcoy**

The Workers Councils Revolution of 1956 in Hungary is maybe one of the most important socialist revolutions in the 20th century. One of its main characteristics was the fight against Stalinist regime and in the same time against the return of the regime of capitalists and landlords. It's without doubt for that reason that this revolution is a "forgotten revolution", sometimes even in militant circles.

Seen as "anti-soviet", the Hungarian revolution of 1956 was a deeply "soviet revolution". If we analyze its methods of struggle, its organization, its claims, its class nature, etc. all that is deeply linked with the experience of Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, specially the role of soviets (or councils).

Hungary 1956 also exposed the counter-revolutionary role and the contradictions of Stalinists regimes in Hungary, in USSR and in other countries of Central and Eastern Europe. In the same time, the Councils Revolution showed the revolutionary possibilities for the working class in its struggle for real socialism, even in the bureaucratic workers states.

The Hungarian revolution of 1956 and the revolutionary working class showed, contrary of what liberals and Stalinists said, that for workers in bureaucratic workers states, during the so called "Cold War", there was more than the choice between capitalism and Stalinism. There was a third option: a political revolution against Stalinism, for real socialism, and against capitalist restoration.

100 years after the Bolshevik Revolution and the following degeneration, the Hungarian revolution of 1956 helps us to understand this degeneration, the role and the contradictions of Stalinists regimes but also it helps us to think about the strategic challenges for workers to fight for the socialist revolution, then and today.

## **For Humanism**

**David Alexander Alderson, Kevin Anderson, Barbara Epstein  
and Robert Spencer**

This panel marks the publication of the timely collection of long essays, *For Humanism* (Pluto, 2017), and will feature three of the five contributors: David Alderson (Manchester), Kevin Anderson (UC, Santa Barbara) and Robert Spencer (Manchester). Through critiques of dominant forms of antihumanist thought - queer theory, poststructuralism and postcolonial discourse theory - the panelists will argue for the importance for the revolutionary tradition of a humanist thought that champions human subjectivity, agency and freedom. This tradition represents the plausible and necessary alternative to both the authoritarian nationalism that is now globally dominant and the alienated freedoms of the market (neoliberalism) such nationalism falsely claims to oppose. Humanism must inform socialist theory, strategy and goals.

## **Understanding and Changing the World: From October Revolution to May 68**

**Dimitra Alifieraki (M.A. student, Technical University of  
Berlin)**

The famous 11th thesis on Feuerbach assumed that philosophers only explained the world the task would then be to change it. Reading the thesis backwards, it would state that in order to change the world, it needs to be explained. This paper will focus on the inner relationship between the two parts of the Marxian thesis through Lenin's remarks and Althusser's readings of Lenin on that theory-praxis relation. The Social Democracy of Lenin's time understood the raising of capitalist condition being realized through a struggle for satisfaction of partial economic interests, a struggle that claimed to be purely economic but actually reflected the political understanding of a bourgeois trade-unionism. On the other side, Lenin, having grasped the significance of the Marxian thesis on theory-praxis relation, emphasized the need of exercising on proletarian consciousness, on the need to connect the confined economic demands of the working class with the political demand of questioning the whole organization of bourgeois society, against any form of actionist corporatist spontaneity. The response against the solidly organized hegemony of the ruling class, its control over production, violence, ideology and knowledge, does need to be equally organized. Half a century later, Althusser employs Lenin's and the Revolutions lesson in a pretty critical phase for the communist movement: the degradation of Comintern, the prevailing belief in the Post Stalin era that rational organization of the socialist state would lead to communism, the failure of the Students May to communicate with the preceding Workers May in France etc.. In the latter conjuncture, the PCF was doomed to what Lenin called tailism, to that pathetic role of consisting the tail of a movement. On the one side the short-sighted economic demands of the workers, on the other side the leftist utopian demands of petty-bourgeois students and finally the unquestioned bourgeois power despite De Gaulles resignation. After reconstructing Lenin's critical insights on theory-

praxis, consciousness-spontaneity relation and filtering the event of the overdetermined October Revolution via the implications of the latter notions, this paper will attempt to provide a reading of Althusser's Leninist insights in his times conjuncture during the 60s.

## **Class consciousness, Group Consciousness, Work Organisation and Unionisation**

**Ian Allinson (University of Keele)**

If being determines consciousness, and capitalism's reliance on collective labour is the soil in which workers' collectivism can grow, how do modern work practices shape workers' collective consciousness? Work is organised and workers are managed in many ways. Some workers cooperate closely in stable teams, while others work on a series of jobs, assignments or projects with different groups of colleagues who may be physically dispersed. Some workers are directly supervised. Others are given targets from above, and are free to choose how to do what the employer wants, then measured on results or on feedback from customers or colleagues. When capitalism brings workers together and exposes them to common experiences and pressures, this can create group consciousness, which is often the building block of workplace organisation. But group consciousness is not the same as class consciousness. Group consciousness can be elitist, sectional, occupational or accept division and oppression such as on national, gender or race grounds. Class consciousness can be seen as anything from mere awareness of class membership, through belief in the centrality of class to social struggle, to awareness of the interests and historical potential of the working class. Looking at a large, partially unionised, private sector workplace within which work is organised and supervised in a variety of ways, this paper explores how work organisation and supervision affects group consciousness and class consciousness, and how they relate to the prevalence of union organisation. These questions shed light on whether changes in work organisation and management represent barriers to worker organisation, and could influence the selection of targets for unionisation.

## **Struggles for a Dignified Life. Politisation and Collectivization of Social Reproduction in the Campamento Nueva Habana in Chile (1970-1973)**

**Valentina Alvarez Lopez (Goldsmiths, University of London)**

A strict division between the private and public and the confinement of women in the domestic sphere used to be more a project and an ideology promoted by industrial capitalism than an everyday life reality of marginalised communities. This was the case in the land seizures that spread in Santiago de Chile with increasing intensity between 1967 and 1973 as a means of demanding housing solutions. Settled in precarious conditions, they organised and worked towards the production of their own urban space. The Campamento Nueva La Habana, consolidated under the rule of the Socialist president Salvador Allende, is paradigmatic in this respect. This paper explores the process of politisation of social reproduction in the Campamento Nueva La Habana. Led by the Leftist Revolutionary Movement, the most radical leftist party during the period, this community was organised through the ideals of *poder popular* (peoples power). It implied the active participation of the local community in the solution of its own problems and towards the improvement of their living conditions. Through norms such as the obligation to take part in organisations, the punishment of domestic violence, daily hygiene checks and institutions that safeguarded

the accomplishment of these rules, they produced and embodied what they deemed a dignified working class subject. At the same time, the poder popular challenged ideals of womens domesticity long embraced by the left along the 20th century, although not without resistances. It encouraged women to take a more active role for which, it was slowly understood, they should be freed from at least part of the burden of domestic labour. The project of community laundry and canteen were clearly an advance in that direction that was, however, truncated by the Coup d Etat in 1973. Interestingly in Nueva La Habana the poder popular started to unsettle ideas on public and private spheres and its gendered association without claiming feminist politics.

## **Money in Shaikh: What's New?**

### **Carolina Alves**

In Capitalism, competition, conflict and crises, Shaikh discusses money as part of a tripod made of exchange, money and price. The focus on exchange means to contextualise the origins of money historically and logically. This is necessary to revisit and clarify old issues regarding functions of money as well as the development of money into money commodities, private and state-issued coins, private and state-issued convertible and inconvertible tokens, state fiat money and bank money. The discussion of this development and functions of money is a preparation for Shaikhs big question: what happens to the laws of money and theory of relative prices when fiat money is no longer linked to gold? Shaikh insists on three points: i) after 1939/40, which is taken to be the beginning of the advent of global fiat money, price indexes in British pounds and US dollar rise more or less continuously, indicating a very different trend than the 150 years before; ii) Marxs treatment of convertible and inconvertible money shows that gold price is valid whether or not gold is the effective medium of pricing because one can acquire gold as medium of safety in either case, and iii) when money commodity no longer serves as direct or indirect medium of pricing, both convertible and inconvertible monies do not fall under the general laws of money deriving from commodity circulation. In this case, price level is determined by monetary and macroeconomic factors and becomes path-dependent. Given this thought-provoking approach to money, the aim of the paper is twofold. Firstly, to analyse Shaikhs contributions and advances regarding Marxs theory of money. Secondly, as Shaikhs construction of a classic analysis of modern fiat and credit money with its own particular theory of inflation is spread in six different chapters, this paper aims to systematise his classical analysis to then access the extent to which Shaikh is able to respond to the big question he posits to himself.

## **Geeks Against Democracy: The Genealogy of Neoreaction**

### **Jon Anderson (Freelance journalist)**

The rise of Donald Trump has brought new attention to hitherto neglected ideological currents on the fringes of the American right. Prominent among these is the Neoreactionary movement (Dark Enlightenment, or NRx). Though it remains small and almost entirely an online phenomenon, there is some evidence of NRx themes filtering into broader rightist discourse. Since Neoreaction is a recent current and the product of a relatively small number of writers, it is possible to track its development. This paper will examine the intellectual and social background of the movement as it has developed over the last decade. This will include its roots in California libertarianism; its drawing on the works of

Thomas Carlyle and Julius Evola; and its blending of traditionalist themes with technofuturism to create its own distinct aesthetic. The NRx online subculture will be examined to ask whether, like the Ayn Rand cult or the Nouvelle Droite before it, a current that is consciously elitist and, in its pure form, self-limiting in appeal, can nonetheless, in a more diluted form, find an echo in society at large. Finally, I will look at the NRx critique of democracy in the light of Marx and Engels engagement with Carlyle. I will argue that the emergence of an explicitly anti-democratic current on the intellectual right is a useful occasion for Marxists to review their own traditions ambivalent view of democracy. This is likely to become a more pressing task as existing democratic regimes are both hollowed out from within and subject to populist insurgencies from without.

## **Five Explicit and Implicit Notions of Revolution in Capital I**

**Kevin B. Anderson (University of California)**

Capital I can be connected to five different notions of revolution: (1) a working class uprising that rises as a form of revolutionary negation of the centralized productive apparatus of modern industrial capitalism, as in Britain at the time, but posed at a high level of abstraction; (2) the much more specific and concrete notion of a British workers revolution being sparked by an agrarian revolution in Ireland, which would shake up the ethnicized false consciousness of British workers and unite them with their immigrant Irish coworkers; (3) revolution from above and below, and in connection to the racialized capitalism of the U.S. during the Civil War; (4) revolution out of joint with the main thrust of Capital I, beginning in non-capitalist agrarian societies with communal village systems which, in resisting capitalist encroachments, also connects to the revolutionary labor movement of Western Europe; (5) revolution that abolishes the modern centralized state as in the Paris Commune, during which freely associated labor was briefly established before the Communes defeat. Thus, we have in Capital I and related writings a Marx who thinks of revolution in terms of capital and labor, but not in a reductionist manner that excludes factors like race, ethnicity, colonialism, the state, and the relationship of noncapitalist social structures to capitalist ones.

## **Value, Struggle, and the Production of Nature**

**Luis Andueza (King's College London)**

Struggle has always been a defining characteristic of capitals socio-ecological constitution. In the early twenty-first century, however, the increasingly unsustainable demands that capital accumulation places upon human and extra-human natures makes even more salient the constitutive role that conflict plays in capitals production of nature: struggles explicitly involving nature are ubiquitous. In spite of this, an ecological conceptualization of capital accumulation as conflict remains to be further developed. This paper draws on and builds upon non-dualist approaches within the Marxist tradition (Neil Smiths thesis on the production of nature, and the work of Jason Moore), and brings them into dialogue with insights from the Open Marxist and post-workerist traditions, and Marxian-influenced anthropological theories of value, to explore ways of approaching both the constitutive role of conflict in capitals socio-ecological reproduction, and non-capitalist practices and their environment-making implications. I centre this discussion in the examination of the pivotal role that the category of value plays in the non-dualist conceptualization of socio-natures, and the implications it has for the understanding of capitalisms inherently contested

landscapes, and the ubiquity of non-capitalist practices that continue, in spite of everything, to sustain life, and harbour possible futures.

## Strategic Imagination, Party and Revolution

**Josep Maria Antentas (Centre d'Estudis Sociològics sobre la Vida Quotidiana i el Treball (QUIT), Institut d'Estudis del Treball (IET), Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB).)**

The coincidence of the anniversary of October 1917 and the current crisis is a sharp stimulus for revolutionary strategic thinking. Addressing reality strategically is a precondition for victory, although no guarantee of it. The culmination of all strategic thinking is to develop what I have called strategic imagination, echoing Wright Mills well-known concept of "sociological imagination. Strategic imagination means thinking from a self-reflective and permanently innovative point of view, in order to revolutionize strategy itself. Radicality, in its double Marx' sense of grasping the root of the matter" and of "the ruthless criticism of the existing order", must be at the core of strategic imagination. This double radicality points out to Lenin's famous advise to poet Valeriu Marcu that One must always try to be as radical as reality itself". This quest for radicality suffers today from the lack of any regulatory strategic horizon (to use Bensad's notion) that links political strategy to a road and to a goal: revolution-rupture and another model of society. Strategic imagination is the basis to achieve what I might call an integral strategy, by analogy with the Gramscian concept of integral state that is a strategy based on a dialectic of "civil society" and "political society" where the struggle takes place in both terrains within the framework of a unified and indivisible strategy. This means adequately synthesizing the relationship between the political and the social, as a kind of "politicization of the social and a socialization of the political" (to borrow the formula from Spanish revolutionary Miguel Romero (1945-2014)). What kind of party is required then? The answer is twofold. On the one hand, a strategist-party to use Bensad's notion inspired in Lenin's politics. On the other hand, a movement-party, a concept that sums up well the vocation to undertake a movement-inspired renewal of the idea of party, as a certain analogy of the well-known concept of social movement unionism. A party that fights for emancipation must be a militant organization. The key strategic question becomes in that sense to frame a model of militancy that goes beyond a mere fragile liquid militancy (adapting Bauman's well-known concept of liquidity) but without falling back into nostalgic models of militancy of almost military connotations or religious devotion. Strategic imagination has the challenge to synthesise militancy and life, politics and human existence. The coincidence of the anniversary of October 1917 and the current crisis is a sharp stimulus for revolutionary strategic thinking. Addressing reality strategically is a precondition for victory, although no guarantee of it. The culmination of all strategic thinking is to develop what I have called strategic imagination, echoing Wright Mills well-known concept of "sociological imagination. Strategic imagination means thinking from a self-reflective and permanently innovative point of view, in order to revolutionize strategy itself. Radicality, in its double Marx' sense of grasping the root of the matter" and of "the ruthless criticism of the existing order", must be at the core of strategic imagination. This double radicality points out to Lenin's famous advise to poet Valeriu Marcu that One must always try to be as radical as reality itself". This quest for radicality suffers today from the lack of any regulatory strategic horizon (to use Bensad's notion) that links political strategy to a road and to a goal: revolution-rupture and another model of society. Strategic imagination is the basis to achieve what I might call an integral strategy, by analogy with the Gramscian concept of integral state that is a strategy based on a dialectic of "civil society" and "political society" where the struggle takes place in both terrains within the framework of a unified and

indivisible strategy. This means adequately synthesizing the relationship between the political and the social, as a kind of "politicization of the social and a socialization of the political" (to borrow the formula from Spanish revolutionary Miguel Romero (1945-2014)). What kind of party is required then? The answer is twofold. On the one hand, a strategist-party to use Bensad's notion inspired in Lenin's politics. On the other hand, a movement-party, a concept that sums up well the vocation to undertake a movement-inspired renewal of the idea of party, as a certain analogy of the well-known concept of social movement unionism. A party that fights for emancipation must be a militant organization. The key strategic question becomes in that sense to frame a model of militancy that goes beyond a mere fragile liquid militancy (adapting Bauman's well-known concept of liquidity) but without falling back into nostalgic models of militancy of almost military connotations or religious devotion. Strategic imagination has the challenge to synthesise militancy and life, politics and human existence.

## **Labour Against Capital: The Revolution in Latin American**

**Ricardo Antunes (Universidade de Campinas - Brazil)**

During the long 20th century, the thesis of revolution and socialism in only one country faced rough difficulties the example of the Cuban Revolution in Latin American is significant in this matter. The social and political movement of the Zapatistas in Mexico, the explosion of unemployed workers in Argentina, the Landless Workers Movement-MST and the Homeless Workers Movement-MTST, both in Brazil, the renewed Latin American trade union and labour class struggles of the 21st century, the resistance of the indigenous communities and the anti-capitalist environmentalists movements are new forms of social and political struggles in opposition to the destructive forces of capital. The end of the polarization between economic action, performed by trade unions, and parliamentary action, performed by political parties, is vital. Political revolutions may initially assume a national structure, but they are limited. Social revolutions, in contrast, are intrinsically universalizing. In the current phase of globalized capitalism, revolution can only be conceived as a universal proposal. The revolution of labour against capital in Latin America should be thought as a part of a process not restricted to a national space. With the globalization of capital, labor's mobilizations assume a universalizing significance and require the working class to think in terms of international action, solidarity and confrontation. In this context, another challenge is to understand the new morphology of the working class, the new workers that frequently alternate between heterogeneity in their form of being (gender, ethnicity, age, qualifications, nationality etc.) and the homogeneity that results from the increasingly precarious condition of work and the erosion of workers rights. Countries such as Brazil, Mexico and Argentina can play an important role in this scenario, since their strong working class and their strategic importance give them great possibilities when linked directly with capital's center. Along with India, Russia, Korea, and South Africa (among others that are not directly central to the capitalist system), they are capable of providing the impulse for a social revolution.



# **The Role of the State and Conservative Politics in Flexibilisation of Female Labour in Turkey**

**Ayşe Arslan (PhD Candidate at SOAS/Development Studies)**

One of the basic outcomes of the neoliberal transformation has been seen in the organisation of working processes and labour relations. In this era, flexibilisation and informalisation of labour, which refer to job insecurity, poor working conditions and less social protection, became a regulating character of contemporary employment forms and relations. In parallel with the elimination of barriers to the flow of capital and globalisation of production, more women became employed especially in the labour-intensive and/or export-oriented sectors as cheap and vulnerable labour. In Turkey, especially in the last decade, the State and conservative politics have played an essential role in the informalisation of female labour through reproducing traditional patriarchal norms. Recent legislative efforts define women on the basis of motherhood and regard them responsible for childcare. Flexible forms of employment are depicted as the best way for women to undertake both productive and reproductive work. Neoliberal-conservative discourses promote labour informality with reference to women's natural family responsibilities. The State tries to increase fertility rate by giving incentives to women on the one hand, and to provide cheap female labour by expanding flexible forms of employment on the other hand. This paper aims to analyse the role of the State and neoliberal-conservative discourses in flexibilisation of female labour in Turkey.

# **Decolonial Museology, Grassroots Resistance, and the Labour of Representation**

**Pansee Atta (Carleton University, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.)**

This presentation investigates two significant moments of grassroots resistance against the epistemic violence of ethnographic exhibition. In so doing, it uncovers the ways that racialized communities negotiate with representational processes, not simply as spectators or stakeholders, but as cultural producers involved in representational labour. The Lubicon Cree boycott of *The Spirit Sings* and Toronto Black communities protest of *Into the Heart of Africa* represent two major moments of community resistance against ethnographic misrepresentation. These two events were significant in shaping museological practice and policy, affecting the landscape of Canadian and international exhibition process to a substantial extent. The formation and impact of these two critical events demonstrates racialized communities agency in governing self-representation through direct action, which becomes a means of negotiating with cultural institutions. Racialized communities are sought out to act superficially as stakeholders in the representational process within the institution, but the tacit compliance of the community around the institution is simultaneously required to support the aura of authenticity in institutions of an international stature. The efficacy of these protests therefore reveals a slippage in museum managerial practices: while these highly-publicized critical events are positioned as excessive and unfortunate, the institution simultaneously requires that racialized communities perform these requisite acts of labour and capital-production in the process of ethnographic exhibition the labour performed here is that of grassroots curation and authentication. So while these protests have been rigorously examined and re-examined in the field of critical museology as unfortunate moments of crisis the avoidance of which is paramount for institutional stability, this presentation uses a labour framework to suggest an alternative view: that the work of grassroots representation and intervention is necessary, inevitable, and in fact, desirable as a challenge to hegemonic museological systems. When the cultural

institution is seen as a site of capital-production built on the monopolistic power to represent, racialized communities public decial can be viewed less as a boycott but rather a strike. This view suggests that unsanctioned grassroots representational labour is significant not just in historically restructuring cultural institutions representational processes, but also in its critical potential in shaping anti-racist decolonial futurities, locally and globally. Seen not as peripheral consultants in a process managed by the institution, but rather, as the central base of representational power, racialized communities can be reframed as significant sites of resistant cultural production, and anti-racist activists as typically unconsidered labourers in the field of auto-ethnography.

## **Ancient Multitudes and Modern Revolution**

**Marcus Bajema (Independent Researcher, PhD in Archaeology from Leiden University)**

The documented existence of multitudes rising up against class oppression in ancient China and the Mediterranean presents a problem for Marxist historiography. On the one hand such movements are to be celebrated for their iconic status, which provides inspiration to modern revolutionaries. Yet on the other hand, the heritage of mechanical perspectives on Marxism assigns them a marginal status. For example, slave revolts are largely absent from Geoffrey de Ste. Croix magisterial The class struggle in the ancient Greek world (1981). That the uprisings in different parts of the ancient world did not have a clear and lasting impact, has led to a view of them as premature or worse. Friedrich Engels, in his Anti-Dhring (1878), even made the argument that without the slave labour of the ancient world there would be no modern socialism. For the fruits offered to moderns by the heritage of Greece and Rome were for him necessarily based on the use of slave labour. In this paper I provide a counter-argument to Engels. Rather than to see slavery as necessary for progress to occur, I argue that the ancient uprisings point to the presence of a multitude as a political force. Using the work of Althusser (2006) and Morfino (2014) on aleatory materialism in relation to historical processes, I will outline a position that allows for two things. The first of these is to point out that the notion of 'necessary slavery' derives from a materialism that is unable to shake off teleology, with dire consequences for political action. Secondly, by taking the aleatory perspective it becomes possible to see ancient multitudes as 'floating elements', that is as historical forces in their own right. Rather than seeing them as a marginal effect of ancient societies and destined to fail, it is necessary to ask the question of the reasons for the failure of uprisings and other historical forces to be combined into new social forms. The answer to this question is not just relevant for understanding the ancient world, but also for the possibility of revolution today. Althusser, L. (2006). Philosophy of the encounter. Later writings, 1978-1987. London, Verso. Engels, F. ([1878] 1975). Herr Eugen Dhring's revolution in science. Marx-Engels collected works: volume 25. London, Lawrence & Wishart: 1-309. Morfino, F. (2014). Plural temporality. Transindividuality and the aleatory between Spinoza and Althusser. Leiden, Brill. de Ste. Croix, G. E. M. (1981). The class struggle in the ancient Greek world. London, Duckworth.

## **Posthegemony: Grammars of the Multitude and Latin America**

**Peter Baker (Durham University)**

This paper seeks to address the lack of engagement with Paolo Virno's notion of the multitude in the context of understanding contemporary social movements and cultural

expressions across Latin America. By focusing on Virno's interpretation of the multitude, it will argue that the current political responses we have seen emerge from the left under the form of 'populisms' over the past twenty years have in fact been responses to new conditions of capitalist accumulation. In this new configuration, Virno's notion of the multitude is particularly useful for thinking beyond traditional Marxist theories to engage with new forms of social activism and cultural work in the region. This consideration will lead us to interrogate whether or not the current proposals from the left in Latin America and indeed elsewhere are actually insufficient. Instead of insisting on the need to establish and construct 'hegemony' in the region, this paper will argue that a different kind of political reflection that I will call 'posthegemonic' (following Beasley-Murray and others) is necessary in order to address the nature of contemporary challenges in Latin America and beyond.

## 1923 Reexamined

### Loren Balhorn

Although history often looks back on Russia as the epicentre of the 1916-1923 revolutionary wave, contemporary protagonists were just as likely to view Berlin as the centre of emerging international socialist republic as Moscow. Bolshevik and many other international leaders of the revolutionary socialist movement believed that only a revolution in the heart of European capitalism, i.e. Germany, would ensure the fledgling Soviet state the political breathing room and material support necessary to survive and grow.

These hopes, evident throughout literature from the period, came to a close following the failure of the German October of 1923, when a planned KPD-led insurrection failed to materialise. Indeed, both the turn towards organisational "Bolshevisation" within the Comintern and Stalin's pivot to the strategy of "Socialism in One Country" were unimaginable without the dashing of revolutionary hopes in 1923. For decades afterwards, this failure functioned as a pivotal foundation upon which the Marxist Left has debated organisational form and strategy. Although reconstructions of Bolshevik and Communist strategy have perhaps receded in importance on the radical left over the last thirty years, fundamental assumptions from these debates and the organizational caricatures that have emerged from them continue to inform many common assumptions.

Beyond Stalinism's discredited, hagiographic legend of an omniscient party leading the masses to an inevitable victory, representative figures for dominant, contrasting interpretations of 1923 are Russian Marxist Leon Trotsky and KPD leader at the time, August Thalheimer. While Trotsky's *Lessons of October* emphasises the subjective failure of the KPD apparatus in organising the uprising, Thalheimer - who ultimately took responsibility for the uprising's failure - emphasised the role played by unripe conditions within the working class and broader society in 1923.

Although these and other interpretations certainly contain many elements of truth and identify significant causal elements, none represent a thorough reconstruction of what happened in 1923, mediated as they were by factional struggles and the political grandstanding characteristic of Bolshevik rhetoric at the time. By synthesising the aforementioned classical works on the topic with lesser known case studies and the swathe of German-language literature often ignored in Anglophone scholarship, this paper contributes to a reframing of the debate around 1923 in Marxist historiography.

# **Is This the Best Use of My Time? Motherhood and Reproductive Labour in Neoliberal Britain**

**Camille Barbagallo**

This paper explores how the affective divisions, the so called 'good' and 'bad' aspects of neoliberal motherhood are maintained and structured as much by race and class as they are by relations of gender. The purpose of the paper is to examine how the affective divisions of motherhood come to define what is possible for a Marxist feminist politics that seeks to transform the conditions of care-domestic labour and maternity. I argue that within the neoliberal construction of motherhood, unwaged domestic 'drudgery' remains devalued, and is conceived of as work that needs to be minimised, is often outsourced to female migrant workers, organised through a series of 'choices' and as a question of time management. Using Marxist feminist theories of social reproduction, I focus on how several interlocking processes of separation and exploitation occur through the binary constructions of maternal labour and domestic work.

# **The Neo-Development of Underdevelopment: Brazil and the Political Economy of South American Integration Under PT**

**Fabio Luis Barbosa dos Santos (Universidade Federal de So Paulo (UNIFESP))**

This article undertakes a critical assessment of the role played by Brazil in the ongoing South American regional integration process. After placing the election of Workers Party (PT) leader Lula da Silva in a regional perspective, I discuss the broad lines of the socioeconomic policies adopted by Workers Party federal administrations since 2003. In connection to that, I underscore the economic rationality behind the regional integration project which has been deepened since then. In particular, I examine the transnational dimensions of the accumulation strategies pursued by the Brazilian state under the so-called "national champions" policy and the political premises underpinning such a project. Finally, I focus on the recent context when economic pressures brought by a fall in the international prices of commodities have converged with corruption scandals to unleash a major political and economic crisis, which led to the impeachment of Dilma Rousseff. My hypothesis is that despite the government rhetoric about a "new developmentalism" project which supports a "post neoliberal" regional integration, the structural continuities imposed by the neoliberal macroeconomic policies are the driving force behind these processes, which have collaborated to contain social pressures both in the domestic and regional contexts. As the ideological articulation between new developmentalism and post neoliberal regionalism is revealed, the political economy of PT presidencies for South America emerges an instrumentalization of regional integration for the purpose of the internationalization of Brazilian oligopolic business consonant with the prevailing international division of labour, in a process that promised a leadership role to the country in the subcontinent, although restrained to the political realm, and to be exercised in critical moments according to the strict limits tolerated by the hegemonic power.

## #1917. Rethinking Dual Power to Take Back the Power

**Emmanuel Barot (Universit Jean Jaurès, Département de Philosophie, Toulouse (France))**

For decades now, in the wake of an evermore conservatively interpreted Gramsci, of an incriminating reading of his East/West dichotomy concerning the structures of the bourgeois State, of the Stalinist-influenced challenge of the strategic concept of dual power and of the conception of solutions of continuity between bourgeois and socialist forms of democracy (of which Poulantzas was both an expression and a theorist, and Laclau-Mouffe a more assumed version), strategic thinking, even in its revolutionary Marxist and Leninist form, has been driven into a corner. Yet, today, two thirds of humanity do not live better than the peasants in Russia under the Romanov dynasty; the forms of the bourgeois State suffer, under the pressure of the general evolution of class relations internationally, from what we could call, behind the periods increasingly reactionary and authoritarian nature, a deep-rooted process of re-Orientalization, conducive to the dissipation of increasingly improbable conciliations between reform and revolution. As such, we would like to re-examine, with Lenin, Trotsky, Gramsci, Rosa Luxembour, and others, in the light of their debates as well as our own, and particularly on the basis of recent historiographical evolutions concerning 1917 and social history, the question of dual power, understood as the process by which the struggling masses endow themselves with their own independent decision-making organs as an antagonistic alternative to existing institutions for the purpose of confronting the latter and the social regime, that of capital, which underlies them. Thereby, it is the very question of power itself, and the fact of setting the goal of taking it back, and ensuring ones ability to do so, or not, that will interest us here. In these times of organic crisis, of counter-revolution, and of the failure of left-wing neopopulist hypotheses, we wish to question the meaning and conditions of one of the political demands of the Russian Revolution in general and of Bolshevism in particular today in preparation for tomorrow.

## Digital Cultural Commodities vs Marx's Capital

**Dave Beech**

Jakob Rigi has rightly criticised Christian Fuchs' theory of value production in the consumption of digital products and he has done so, largely, through a reading of Marx' s value theory of labour. However, Rigi' s theory (developed with Robert Prey) that the value of digital products tends towards zero is based on a misreading of Marx based on a misconception of how digital products are actually produced and reproduced. When digital products can be copied with a single click in an instant, they appear to have no value if value is determined entirely by the amount of labour it takes to 'reproduce' a commodity. This paper will outline a value theory of digital cultural commodities that does not focus on individual acts of production and replication but the average socially necessary labour time required to reproduce a product. Marx does not provide a value theory for digital products or anything resembling them. We cannot merely apply Marxist value theory to them. This is the mistake that Rigi makes by assigning the concept of reproduction to the acts of copying and downloading digital products.

# **Affirming the New: Art of the Mexican and Russian Revolutions**

## **Crystal Stella Becerril**

While the Russian Revolution was just getting underway, the Mexican Revolution was entering its seventh year. While the Bolsheviks were storming the Winter Palace, the leadership of the Mexican revolution was enacting the one of most progressive constitution ever to exist, and as with most revolutionary periods, art played a significant role in helping the masses relate to that revolutionary moment. In Russia, the cultural avant-garde produced such movements as Suprematism and Proun; artistic movements which sought to challenge traditional bourgeois forms of artistic production and consumption. In Mexico, printmaking and muralism generalized class struggle and its heroes, making the art of the revolution and by extension, the revolution's spirit accessible to the masses. The influence of these movements remains evident today, and understanding their roots and evolutionary process is key to understanding what artists today can contribute to our own tumultuous times. This paper will compare and contrast the artistic movements spawned by both revolutions, their impact on society, and their influence on the global art world, past and present. Additionally, it will investigate the idea held by both movements that art should be of and for masses, and that while it should reflect their reality, it should also transcend it. It will examine the politics which informed the art, as well as understanding the respective movements' goals of producing both powerful propaganda for its popular cause and art which challenged ordinary people to imagine a radically different world.

# **Transcending Cultural Feminism: Towards a Militant and Marxist Xicanisma**

## **Crystal Stella Becerril (Editor, Red Wedge Magazine; Co-Founder, SAL(T): Xicana Marxist Thoughts)**

From childcare and food service, to factory and farm work, the Xicana exists in the most precarious shadows of capitalism, performing the productive and reproductive labor necessary for capitalist accumulation to take place. The revolutionary potential of Xicanisma (Xicana feminism) can and must transcend the visceral and cultural politics which constitute its current formation. This is necessary if the Xicana is to help shape and lead class struggle in the years to come and it will require a new and decidedly Marxist approach. In service of that project, this paper will challenge Xicana feminism to shed its postmodern framework and move beyond its established identity-centric cultural feminism. This inquiry begins from the premise that as we enter a new era of socio-economic capitalist reorganization under Trump, the project of building an explicitly Marxist Xicana feminism is absolutely necessary as Latinas, particularly Xicanas, account for one of the largest segments of the American workforce and hold a central role in both social reproduction AND production in the US and beyond. It is critical, then, that current Xicana feminist theory transcend its post-modern cultural front. This paper argues that now more than ever, it is absolutely necessary for a new wave of Xicanisma to emerge, one which understands that class is not merely another category of oppression, but rather that the oppression and exploitation of one class by another is at the heart of capitalism's socio-economic system, not in its periphery. That this class antagonism underlies nearly every one of her lived experiences and by its very nature breeds her resistance to it. This paper will interrogate the theoretical foundation of the cultural Xicanisma that exists today, attempt to recover the lost history of anti-racist Marxist influenced class struggle that birthed Chicano politics in the

1960s and 1970s, and look to social reproduction theory to help offer up a point of departure for transcending cultural Xicana feminism and ushering in a militant, materialist and Marxist Xicanisma for the 21st century.

## **What's Value Got to do with the Critique of Political Economy? The Multiple Meanings of Value Theory in Marx.**

**Riccardo Bellofiore (University of Bergamo (Italy))**

Karl Marx's critique of political economy is grounded in his value theory. Critique has to be distinguished from criticism: Marx was not only interested in pointing out the errors of political economy, but also to learn from its scientific results: here the key names are Quesnay, Smith, and Ricardo. Marx was also interested in assessing the conditions and the limits of the knowledge provided by Classical Political Economy. At the same time, the critique of the science of political economy was the means to provide a critique of capitalist social relations. The uniqueness of Marx is that his value theory is the only one consistently put forward within a monetary analysis: that is, it introduces money in the very initial deduction of value. In fact, Marx's object of inquiry is capital understood as a social relation of production, characterised by two main defining traits: the exploitation of labour within a monetary commodity-producing economy; an internal tendency to crisis. The connection between money and class exploitation, on the one side, and the endogeneity of crisis, on the other side, is related to the view that, in a capitalist economy, the value added (a monetary magnitude) newly produced within the period has its exclusive source in abstract labour as an activity more precisely, in the living labour of the wage workers. In a nutshell, Marx's reasoning may be easily captured in a macro-monetary theory of capitalist production. In the capitalist labour process, the totality of wage workers is reproducing the means of production employed and producing a net product. The net product is expressed on the market as a new money value that is added to the money value attached to the means of production, historically inherited from the past. This value added is the monetary expression of the living labour time that has been objectified by the wage workers in the period. The value of the labour power (for the entire working class), which is exhibited in money wages, is regulated by the labour-time required to reproduce the capacity for labour, and hence by the labour time required to reproduce the means of subsistence bought on the market. Accordingly, the surplus value (value added less value of labour power) originates from a surplus labour, defined as the positive difference between, on the one hand, the whole of living labour spent in producing the total (net) product of capital and, on the other, the share of that living labour which has been necessary to devote to reproducing the wages, which Marx labels as necessary labour. Marxian critique of political economy is inseparable from the meaning Marx gave to the labour theory of value, which in his case was rather a value theory of labour. The issue is how the production and circulation relations are affected by the fact that labour takes the capitalist social form of being productive of a value and surplus value embedded in things, in commodities. In the following I will look at Marx's value theory from five perspectives: (i) as a monetary value theory; (ii) as a theory of exploitation; (iii) as a macro-monetary theory of capitalist production; (iv) as a theory of individual prices; (v) as a theory of crises.

# Capitalism as Postcolonial: Rewriting European Citizenships

**Ilaria Bertazzi (Universit degli Studi di Torino)**

Race constitutes primarily, but not exclusively, an apparatus of workforce segmentation, a mechanism of differential exploitation that, while working on a global scale, adapt itself to local, geographical and historical specificities. It is not to be forgotten that capitalism and racism rise together with the colonialist adventure, as Quijano reminds us. We can therefore define racism as an internal supplement to the construction of the capitalist labor market inside nation-states, that is crucially shaped by the micro-macro relationship between national institutions and individuals. In Europe, such apparatus traces back in exploitation forms that are anchored to the specific dimension of migration, as Balibar states Immigration has become, par excellence, the name of race [Balibar Wallerstein, 1991]. In particular, as many scholars pointed out, migration displays its segregational power as related to the precarious legal status that is embedded in the migratory experience, where the threat of deportation is not only a concrete perspective for undocumented migrants, but constitutes a general, omnipresent disciplinary possibility for each and every non-citizen. Contemporary anti-racist struggles on Europe are usually understood as struggles for freedom of movement or, at their most radical declination, struggles against borders in themselves. As far as it constitute a crucial battleground, this perspective still is centered on the idea that any anti-racist action, from the point of view of white citizens, is nothing but a form of solidarity to others (the so-called racialized). If, instead, we understand that racism involves everyone, given that racialization is a complex system of distribution of hierarchies and privileges, we have to state that any anti-capitalist struggle can not avoid to be declined on top of one of capitals foundations, race - together with gender and sexuality. Since the modern concept of citizenship - also because its genealogy lies inside European colonial experience - is not only a management device for migratory and labor dynamics, but constitutes one of the foundations of the current rationalization process, this work aims to discuss that a crucial point of action of a radical anti-racist anti-capitalism may well be the dismantling of the figure of the "citizen" in itself, in order to provide a foundation for a solid class recomposition.

## Book Launch: Social Reproduction Theory, Recentring Oppression

**Tithi Bhattacharya (Author, Purdue University), Hester Eisenstein, Colin Barker**

*Social Reproduction Theory: Remapping Class, Re-centring Oppression* is an anthology of essays that brings together leading Marxist-feminist theorists to explore how daily life is reproduced under capitalism. The volume focuses on issues such as childcare, healthcare, education, family life, and the roles of gender, race, and sexuality—all of which are central to understanding the relationship between exploitation and social oppression. The panel will discuss the volume by placing it within our current conjuncture of a neoliberal crisis and discuss to what extent social reproduction theory in general and this volume in particular is able to map anticapitalist resolutions.



# Shake the City: Space, Time, Music, Crisis

## Alexander Billet

When space is transformed, so is time. The reverse is also true. When a crowd asserts its collective will onto a public space, the tempo and rhythm of that space is similarly reshaped. This has implications for musical creation, particularly if we frame music's definition as an aestheticization of time (which we should). As capital's domination of public space and time is challenged, so is our relationship with composed rhythm and sonic dynamics. Using John Bergers *The Nature of Mass Demonstrations* as a starting point, and combining Henri Lefebvres rhythmanalysis with Mark Abels work on the nature of groove music, this paper will explore how the return of spatial politics has resonated into the aesthetics of song-making. This will be first examined via the usage of music to impose collective power over public space 2010s dubstep rebellion, Pussy Riot, the spontaneous chanting of hip-hop lyrics on Black Lives Matter demonstrations. It will then illustrate how these politics and movements have impacted both the formal and thematic composition of music in the studio, spurring recording artists to experiment with musical and lyrical form. A final section will be devoted to informed speculation regarding what this might mean for breaking with neoliberalism's highly individuated mediation of our relationship to music, as well as highlighting the work of radical and anti-capitalist artists who are increasingly aware of their temporal and geographic context.

# Work-Time Regulation and Labour Market Liberalization: Comparing the French and German Roads to Reducing Full-Time Work Hours

## Jonah Birch

Since the 1970's, governments and labor movements across Western Europe have repeatedly opted for a strategy of work-time reduction to counter rising joblessness. Originally pushed by segments of the trade unions as a means of boosting employment growth while 'humanizing' work-life, proposals to cut standard weekly hours for full-time workers were central to this strategy. Yet, research on the effects of this approach suggest that, in practice, it more often proved to be a vehicle for labor market 'flexibilization' than an alternative to it. I argue that the effectiveness of this strategy depends on the ability to impose new regulatory mandates on employers rather than relying on voluntary agreements negotiated at the sector or firm level. To support that view, I compare the fate of the 35-hour workweek in Germany and France. In the former, I show, the reliance of the 'activist' unions on the traditional institutions of 'pattern bargaining' limited the impact of reducing weekly work-hours on employment, while leaving labor vulnerable to retrenchment as employers bargaining power increased. In France, by contrast the introduction of binding legislation mandating a cut in weekly hours meant that the shift to the statutory 35-hour workweek had much greater consequences in terms of actual weekly hours and job creation. It was the retreat of the Socialist party from that strategy in the face of sustained business opposition, I demonstrate, that mitigated against the success of work-time reduction as an employment policy.

## **Did the Bolsheviks Call for Socialist Revolution in 1917?**

**Eric Blanc (NYU Sociology)**

According to most academic and activist historiography, the Bolshevik party advocated socialist revolution in Russia from April 1917 onwards. In this paper I challenge the prevailing account through a critical reassessment of Bolshevik primary sources in both the centre and periphery of the empire. Contrary to what has been widely assumed, the call for 'All Power to the Soviets' was not equated by the Bolshevik party with advocacy of socialist revolution. Though Lenin and Trotsky envisioned that a Soviet regime would be led by the working class and take steps beyond capitalism, such a perspective was not adopted by the Bolshevik party until after the October Revolution. The evolution of Bolshevism, in short, was much more protracted than has been hitherto acknowledged. By looking at the evolution of Bolshevism over the course of 1917, I show that the party's political radicalisation was more the product of accumulated experience and developments in class struggle than the result of Lenin's political 're-arming' in April 1917.

## **The Accumulation of Debt: New Perspectives on Profit, Crisis, and Inequality**

**Niko Block (York University), Greg Albo (York University), Sune Sandbeck (York University)**

This panel will present our in-progress essay collection, *The Accumulation of Debt: New Perspectives on Profit, Crisis, and Inequality*, which will be co-edited by Niko Block and Paul Kellogg, and has garnered interest from Palgrave Macmillan. Sune Sandbeck and Greg Albo will present their contributions to the volume, while Niko Block will present the broader themes of the book.

Given that we are still looking for contributors to this project, our hope is that this discussion will help us connect with others who are doing related research. Amidst the increasingly complex and unconventional policy practices of central banks throughout the world, a major theoretical challenge today is to provide a coherent and engaged perspective on the circulation and accumulation of capital. In undertaking this project of de-mystifying capitalist finance, we begin by examining one of the most basic yet understudied questions in economics: the question of where profit-funding money comes from. In historical perspective, volume one of *Capital* concretely theorizes the production of surplus value in labour-time, but it is in fact more difficult to see how, in the macroeconomic capital circuit, those surpluses are realized as profits in money. If we model the economy as a closed system in which workers spend their entire wages on commodities in a given cycle, then the capitalist sector as a whole would merely break even and therefore fail to realize any profits. Where, then, does the surplus liquidity that finances corporate profits come from? As Marx writes in volume two, *How can the entire capitalist class manage to draw continually 600 out of circulation, when it continually throws only 500 into it?* (MECW vol. 36 2010: 329) By contrast to the microeconomic focus of bourgeois economics, we argue that we should begin our analysis of the capital circuit by examining the problem of profit realization at the macro level. Only a handful of thinkers over the past two centuries have confronted this problem head-on, and most of their proposed solutions are either incomplete or misguided. Marx's suggestions, for instance, that the paradox might be explained by money hoarding, increased velocity, and expanding gold production do not in our view succeed in the final analysis. One of the few economists to pick up where Marx left off, of course, was Rosa Luxemburg, who argued that the contradiction could only be

resolved by the injection of new money from outside the capitalist system typically through imperialist practices that facilitate the export of cheap industrial goods from the capitalist countries to the non-capitalist ones. (Luxemburg 2003: 434-47) From a contemporary perspective, however, it seems unlikely that her solution to the problem is entirely complete, given that all but a few of the core capitalist states now have substantial current account deficits.

The other noteworthy Marxian school of thought that deals with the profit problem are those who subscribe to some form of underconsumptionism, the most influential of whom is probably Paul Sweezy. But Sweezy's theory never fully succeeded in either articulating or resolving the problem, and he ultimately abandoned the concept of underconsumptionism in favour of a rather equivocal theory of overaccumulation. (Sweezy 1964: 156-89; Sweezy 1981: 34-43) Likewise, other proponents of underconsumptionism have also generally failed to produce a coherent and systematic explanation of profit realization.

Finally, in the past thirty years, a number of post-Keynesian economists have approached the profit problem with a more strictly monetary approach, suggesting, for instance, that the contradiction is resolved by overlapping monetary circuits in the economy, by accelerations in the velocity of money, or by government spending. But as Louis-Philippe Rochon points out, none of these attempts have persuasively solved the problem. (Rochon 2005)

Contrary to these rather vague theories of the capital circuit, David Harvey has proposed the very straightforward idea that profits under the system of capitalist banking must be financed by deficits that are incurred elsewhere in the economy, so that the accumulation of wealth has to be paralleled by the accumulation of debt. (Harvey 2013: 206) This, in our view, is the only tenable way to explain profit realization in the macroeconomic capital circuit, because it actually reflects the existing credit-based system of money creation under capitalist banking.

But Harvey's analysis of the surplus absorption problem does not make the case for the debt-accumulation theory of the capital circuit in a comprehensive and systematic manner, which is what we intend to at least begin to do in this volume. (Harvey 2010: 182) Doing so will demand answering several questions that are raised by this approach. How can we model the theory? What is the empirical evidence for it? How did it evolve historically? How is the long-term accumulation of debt related to financial crises? How might it explain the recent shifts in monetary policy? And finally, how can we square this strictly monetary perspective on capital circulation with the labour theory of value?

Niko Blocks presentation will discuss both the theoretical and empirical basis for the debt-accumulation perspective. On the theoretical side, he argues that the process can be viewed clearly if we use a closed economy model with four sectors: households, government, non-financial corporations, and banks. We can simplify the model even further if we label households and government as the civil sectors, and corporations and banks as the capitalist sectors. If we apply the rules of capitalist banking within this simple framework, it becomes clear that in each economic cycle the total profit gained by the capitalist sectors needs to be matched by a commensurate deficit in the civil sectors. Empirically, if we take the US as our case study, we can see that capitalist profits and civil deficits are indeed very closely correlated. (See the attached graph.) Over time, this means that debt absolutely must accumulate in the civil sectors—a process that depresses aggregate demand and in turn places downward pressure on interest rates. This presentation will also present some preliminary ideas on how the circulation model might be unified with the labour theory of value.

Greg Albo's presentation will focus on the problems that debt accumulation poses for state finance and monetary policy in the twenty-first century.

Finally, Sune Sandbeck will examine the historical construction of the credit system in Europe, with a particular focus on England. Specifically, this presentation will examine the relationship between the establishment of modern central banking and the state-based system of debt accumulation during the period of early industrialization.

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## **Laboratory of Resistance: An Interim Assessment of Union Organising at Global E-commerce Leader Amazon in Germany and Europe**

**Joern Boewe, Johannes Schulten**

For more than four years, workers at Amazon Germany continue to fight for a collective wage agreement. Although the labour dispute has still not been won, it exemplifies the struggle of employees in the low-wage sector against a global corporation. The focus of struggle is in Germany, but it is also an European conflict in which French, Polish, Italian, British and Spanish workers have taken part. The struggle at Amazon is much more than a wage conflict. Amazon is trying to impose a model of industrial relations where collective agreements and trade unions have no place in it. Because Amazon is an industry leader in the online retail sector, this model could become a blue-print for other companies in the future world of work, as we already can see in phenomena like the "servicization" of broader parts of the manufacturing industry, the growing low-wage-sector especially in private services or the "platformization" of work by companies like Uber. Unions are faced with a double challenge: They have to organize and defend a growing sector of low paid, often temporarily-contracted and generally underprivileged part of the working class as well as to ensure their right to collective bargaining and freedom of association, that means their right to exist, in the future. By trying this, the conflict at Amazon has become a laboratory of resistance. Important lessons have been learned, not only with respect to resistance against low wages and precarious employment in Germany, but also in terms of the conflict with the corporation at its other sites in Europe and new forms of workers participation, rank-and-file-organizing at the work place and democratization of industrial conflicts and the unions themselves.

## **Capital Crimes: Incarceration and Confinement in Capitalist Modernity**

**Ashley Bohrer (Truax Postdoctoral Fellow, Hamilton College)**

In the fifteenth century, British landowners engaged in a new strategy of wealth accumulation: the creation of hedged land enclosures that forced poor peasants off their land, confined them to city slums, and turned them into the first proletarian work force in

history. The birth of capitalism as a world system was dependent on the creation of these hedges; hedges were thus the first tactic of capitalist dispossession, and emerged as a tactic that took its aim specifically at the mobility of the poor. After enclosures, capitalism continued to invent ever-new strategies of confining the working class. Workhouses and poor-houses, the fore-runners of modern-day prisons, mushroomed in the sixteenth century to manage the newly impoverished workers, women, and children; this phenomenon was so widespread that Yann Moulier-Boutang refers to it as The Great Fixation. As Silvia Federici notes, women became confined to the domestic sphere so their labor could be used for capitalist accumulation but remain unpaid. At the same time, European powers ushered in the new regime of race relations through its use of confinement strategies of colonial capitalism in Middle Passage ships, mines, and large-scale plantations to expropriate the land and labor of African and Amerindian peoples for the benefit of Europe. After the end of de jure slavery, tactics of redlining, segregation, and the creation of slums, constituted a mechanism of both control and accumulation of racialized capitalism. Throughout capitalisms history, confinement has been used as a tactic of accumulation, one shot through with the raced, gendered, and classed components that an intersectional analysis of capitalism locates as crucial. This paper looks at the rise of capitalism in early modernity to argue that mass incarceration, inextricably tied to the drug war, is only the latest strategy of confinement for the working class. Drawing on the works of Silvia Federici, Michelle Alexander, Michel Foucault, and Yann Moulier-Boutang, I argue that confinement constitutes a central strategy of capitalist accumulation. This analysis in no way seeks to erase the particularities of the war on drugs or mass incarceration, but rather seeks to place it in historical and theoretical context, connecting our present reality to the history of working class, feminist, and anti-racist struggle that has characterized the fight against capitalism since its inception. Reading the formation of the racist and sexist regime of mass incarceration as a strategy of a structural and logical component of the structure of capitalism will allow us to see that the struggle against the drug war must emerge as a struggle against the global socio-economic system of capitalism itself.

## **(Gender) Policing the Poor: Capitalism, Sexuality, and Carcerality in the 21st century**

**Ashley Bohrer (Truax Postdoctoral Fellow, Hamilton College)**

As the rising tide of police brutality and mass incarceration capture more and more of the publics attention, queer people have been consistently pushed to the margins of police and prison justice organizing. Books like Michelle Alexanders *The New Jim Crow* and Loic Wacquants *Punishing the Poor* make clear that the contemporary system polices and imprisons those who fall at the intersection of racialization and poverty in a systematic way. However, even as the system of mass incarceration comes under more scrutiny, the public and the social justice organizing around these issues fail to consider the ways in which the policing of poor peoples sexuality is at the core of the project of capitalisms carceral structure. As Mogul, Ritchie, and Whitlock argue in *Queer (In)Justice* prisons and policing have always been and continue to be strategies of policing and controlling gender identity and sexuality. Taking over the concept of carcerality from LeBaron and Roberts, I argue that heteronormativity is itself a carceral structure, one that is related to class and to capitalism in a structural rather than accidental way. Mobilizing resources from queer theory, Marxism, intersectionality, prison studies, and critical race theory, this paper looks at the intersection of poverty and sexuality through the contemporary system of mass incarceration, looking not only at the disproportionate rates of queer incarcerations, but also at the targeted violence that queer people face at every step of the criminal legal system. In so doing, I argue that in the 21st century, the policing of crime, the policing of poor

communities, and the policing of gender are themselves part of a single logic, that of (gender) policing.

## The BRICS Face Anti-Subimperial Resistances

**Patrick Bond (University of the Witwatersrand)**

The Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa nexus BRICS has been touted as the basis for polycentric geopolitics for nearly a decade. But as the tendency to veer rightwards towards authoritarian neoliberalism asserts itself in harsh economic times, the BRICS leaders' anti-imperialist and global-reform rhetorics (often parroted by allied intellectuals) have become untenable. Below the surface lies a seamy reality: these five states empowerment of both imperialist multilateral institutions and their home corporations. There is nowhere more obvious a site for the expression of subimperialist agendas, as foreseen in analyses by Ruy Mauro Marini (1960s-70s) and David Harvey (2000s), than Africa. What sorts of social resistances are emerging within and around the BRICS? Can they link up into brics-from-below formulations that, in turn, build from current atomistic upsurges, and then transcend Polanyian (anti-neoliberal) modes of resistance, to herald more revolutionary potentials? To answer requires not just assessment of the multiple, overlapping and sometimes interlocking protest movements within the BRICS themselves. Often overlooked are hinterland revolts against BRICS-influenced institutions and corporations (such as Brazils Vale mining, Russias Rosatom nukes, Indias Vedanta mining, Chinas financiers and state companies, and South Africas mining and cellphone firms). Given the macro-economic context in which the commodity-supercycle (initiated by Chinese minerals and petroleum consumption) peaked in 2011, and given the vast African debt to China, many countries now suffer intensified extractive processes. As prices have fallen, pressure from the shareholders of existing BRICS (and Western) firms are increasing output volumes and intensifying the capital-nature metabolism, while simultaneously decreasing the firms half-hearted mitigation of eco-social damage and driving down wages. As currency levels follow in a vicious circle, the pressure to increase state subsidies of BRICS and Western extraction rises. One example is the G20s Compact with Africa, and others include infrastructure financing strategies that rely upon host-country guarantees. These processes amplify uneven development and in turn have been met by much higher levels of African social protest, both at sites of extraction and in the main cities. According to Pentagon-funded surveys of violent African protests, the demand for higher wages and better working conditions consistently ranked as the main cause in recent years, but non-violent protest rationales also ranked anti-government sentiments as a catalyst for mass mobilisations. In Western solidarity circuits, there are well-established routes to punish firms and multilateral institutions for their roles in oppressing Africans (the most successful of which was to pull AntiRetroViral medicines out of the Trade Related Intellectual Property System in 2001, which permitted production of inexpensive generics that in turn raised life expectancy in many AIDS-affected countries dramatically, e.g. in South Africa from 52 to 62). The anti-imperial agenda will continue to be expressed in African campaigns, albeit often overly-influenced by international NGOs. The need to contest BRICS-based faux-reformers of imperialism was expressed by Giovanni Arrighi, Terence Hopkins and Immanuel Wallerstein in their 1989 book *Anti-Systemic Movements*: The more that popular struggles focus in each national setting on whatever regime is in office, and so become focused on who speaks in the name of that national people as a whole, the more will such struggles weaken the workings of the world-scale class-forming process and strengthen the interstate system. The more, on the other hand, the popular movements join forces across borders (and continents) to have their respective state officials abrogate those relations of the interstate system through which the pressure is conveyed, the less likely they are to weaken, and the more likely they are to

strengthen, the pivotal class-forming process of the world-economy. The BRICS exploitation of Africa offers many reasons to update and endorse this strategic insight.

## **The Evolution of Neoliberalism in Tunisia from 1980-2017**

**Edna Bonhomme (Princeton University)**

Neoliberal policies, as we know them today, were introduced in Tunisia in 1987 and expanded under Ben Ali with the tightening of international relationships with the IMF and the World Bank. Structural adjustment programs were implemented in the Middle East and North Africa following the economic crisis of the 1980s. After the passage of Law 87-47 in August 1987, the Tunisia state to transfer parts of the public sector into the private industry which laid the groundwork for neoliberal reforms. These policies were instated during the Ben Ali regime included the privatization of public assets, the weakening of welfare policies, and the restructuring of tax and investment codes. The economic crisis of 2008 that began on Wall Street and spread globally, sparking mass turmoil, dissatisfaction, and protest sparked resistance particularly in Tunisia. In fact, that struggle persists to this day with respect to corruption, unemployment, and labor with interior and southern provinces playing a key role in challenging the political economic situation. While there have been gains to address political sovereignty and transparency, unemployment has been on the rise with the rate in Tunisia going from 12.8% in 2010 up to 15.5% in 2016. Unemployment in Tunisia remains uneven with respect to geography resulting in unemployment rates of 10% in Tunis and up to 50% in interior and southern provinces. The economic, political, and social challenges in Tunisia have not been unique. However, the country has been purported as a success story given the massive repression in Egypt, the disarray in Libya, and the civil wars in Syria and Yemen. At the same time, the relative economic and political stability in Tunisia means that a victory can spread elsewhere as it did in 2010. This paper sheds light on the evolution of neoliberalism in Tunisia with an emphasis on how the interior and southern Tunisian cities such as Gafsa and Tataouine have been leading protests over the past decade. It will also think about the ways that neoliberalism in Tunisia has shifted since the Arab Spring.

## **The Other Marx: Philosophy and Critical Theory in Latin America**

**Bruno Bosteels**

This paper aims to analyze the originality of some rather heterodox works in the tradition of Latin American Marxism, mainly through the thinking of Oscar del Barco, Len Rozitchner and Fernanda Navarro. The point is to overcome the debates about Eurocentrism and the decolonial option so as to give new relevance to the project of a critical theory of capitalism. Taking as my point of departure del Barco's groundbreaking book *El otro Marx*, written from exile in Mexico after the author had offered a scathing critique of Leninism in *Para una crítica de la teoría y la práctica del leninismo*, I will focus on the moment when a deconstructive reading of Marx turns into an antipolitical plea against militancy in general.

# **A Dialogue between Social Reproduction Feminism and French Materialist Feminism. From Domestic Labour to Social Reproduction and (dialectically) Back Again**

**Elsa Boulet (Phd candidate, Universit Lyon 2, France)**

Social-reproduction Feminism has proved to be a compelling development in critical Marxist theory (Brenner and Laslett, 1989; Ferguson, 2016). Debates and exchanges within and across borders have been central to its formulation, as indeed they have been for the elaboration of Feminist theory (theories) in general. I suggest that an international(ist) dialogue between Social-reproduction Feminism and French Materialist Feminism is not only possible but also necessary. Materialist Feminism is a trend of research that, albeit its diversity, can be delimited by a focus on the gendered division of labour. Materialist Feminists distance themselves from Marxism while using the epistemological stance of materialism: explaining the social organisation by the concrete conditions of production and living. My point is that, although the concept of social reproduction provides important insights, it is limited by a contradiction in its definition: is social reproduction defined by the content or effect of the labour performed (the reproduction of the labour force), or is it defined as opposed to production (as a labour performed outside the wage relationship and the production of surplus-value)? If social reproduction simply is another word for domestic labour, it seems we lose the theoretical precision of the notion of domestic labour, and its political implications. On the other hand, if social reproduction consists of a set of tasks, we are at risk of underestimating the social relationships of exploitation and oppression that organise those tasks. Drawing on Materialist-feminist theorists such as Christine Delphy (Delphy, 2001), Colette Guillaumin (Guillaumin, 2003) and Danile Kergoat (Kergoat, 2012), I argue that we need to retain the notion of domestic labour and distinguish it from that of social reproduction. In this perspective, social reproduction enables us to think of the reproduction of the labour-force as something that takes place within different labour-relationships, the dominant forms of relationships in advanced capitalist societies being the wage-relationship and the domestic relationship. Using the concept of sexage defined by Collette Guillaumin, I argue that domestic labour must be understood as a specific labour relation theoretically irrespective of the tasks performed that constitutes one manifestation of the relationship of appropriation of women by men. Sexage proves to be a useful notion to think about capitalism not as an abstract (mathematical) model, but as a concrete, gendered and racialised mode of production. Brenner Johanna et Laslett Barbara, *Gender and Social Reproduction: Historical Perspectives*, *Annual Review of Sociology*, 15, 1989, p.381404. Delphy Christine, *Lenne principal. 1- conomie politique du patriarcats*, Paris, Syllepses, coll.Nouvelles questions fministes, 2001. Ferguson Susan, *Intersectionality and Social-reproduction Feminism. Towards an Integrative Ontology*, *Historical Materialism*, 24-2, 2016, p.3860. Guillaumin Colette, *Racism, Sexism, Power and Ideology*, Routledge., London and New York, coll.Critical Studies in Racism and Migration, 2003. Kergoat Danile, *Se battre, disent-elles...*, *La Dispute.*, Paris, coll.Le genre du monde, 2012.

## **Towards a Materialist Theory of Marketing**

**Alan Bradshaw**

In business schools, the fundamental assumption persists that profit is generated by selling commodities and services to consumers. Marketing is understood as a bridge between organisations and consumers, allowing the organisation to develop a more systematic appreciation of consumer demand so to learn how to satisfy consumer wants and needs. At its most ideological, marketing is presented as a means of taming capitalism from below



because it allows the truly autonomous subject the consumer to determine, via sensitive market research techniques, what will be produced by corporations, as well as where it will be sold and at what price. Accordingly, this general understanding of marketing is far from a dialectical materialist understanding which would instead emphasise class domination and labour as the primary source of profit. From a marketing perspective, Marxism is irrelevant and anachronistic because it is accused of taking a productionist perspective and therefore fails to recognise how innovation is driven by consumer demand. From a Marxist perspective, marketing has generally been addressed by developing theories like false consciousness and consumer manipulation, which seem to regard marketing practitioners as evil genius hidden persuaders to whom all sorts of nefarious intentions can be attributed (for example, corporate executives order the manufacture of Barbie because they want to reproduce patriarchy). Any presumption of marketing manager as either evil or, even more so, genius is clearly ridiculous. Consequentially, I argue that we are left with a poor quality critical appreciation of marketing which either overstates its capability, or ignores it. In this paper, I attempt to theorise marketing afresh, this time grounded in Marxist principles of class composition. I argue that consumer demand is an ideological construct (Adorno & Horkheimer called it a circle of manipulation and retroactive need) not grounded in any dialectical material analysis. Consumer demand, therefore, is argued to be an alibi, a rhetorical device that keeps the gaze firmly located on the commodity and the consumer. Instead marketing is identified as a mechanism for de-skilling labour and a constant abstraction of the formal skills and power relationships that labour accumulates within organisations. Accordingly, the perfect example of a marketing organisation is Nike, wherein the once highly skilled expertise of shoemaking has been completely deskilled then outsourced to sweatshop production, leaving a tiny shell-like organisation capable of extracting gigantic surpluses. Other examples are pursued, including the current draining of academic knowledge from universities, and investigative journalism from newspapers. A thinly veiled contempt for workers, and a general atmosphere of hostility, is discernible within marketing discourse and this shall be explored. Therefore, this paper will argue that marketing ought to be understood as a form of class warfare from above, and an ideology designed to deskill labour.

## **The Necropolitics of Social Reproduction**

### **Carina Brand (De Montfort University)**

The paper will use Mbembes concept of necropolitics[1] to investigate the role of social reproduction in capitalism.[2] Absent from Mbembes analysis of necropolitics is the role of gender, the mother and sphere of the home as integral to colonialism, war and both the necropolitical and biopolitical. Because the sphere of social reproduction is the very locus of life, can we assume that it is also the locus of death?[3] Marxist Feminists argue capitalism is reliant on the production of life (that only woman can give)[4] and because capitalism will strive to squeeze as much surplus from its workers (thus causing poverty)[5] we are caught in a cycle of needing life but giving suspended death. I will discuss a range of films that focus on the domain of the home, or social reproduction and extend Mbembes analysis from the public state of necropolitics and biopolitics to the central role of biological reproduction, the home and the concept of the mother and family in necropolitical, fascist and capitalist economies.[6] In investigating the historically contingent concepts of life and death in relation to the sphere of social reproduction under capitalism we can illuminate the way that value is ascribed, or inscribed to the reproducing body[7] or sphere. Values are placed with varying degrees on certain bodies and social reproductive activities, and as Mbembe identifies with necropolitics it is under complete political and economic domination that we see the living dead. Through discussing Spielreins proposal

that the production of life through biological reproduction is inherently connected to death[8] in psychoanalysis, (later developed by Freud in the concept of the death drive) we can locate this conceptual correlation between life and death in late capitalism. This historical period is also inherently tied to Foucault's concept of bio-power and the control and construction of sexuality in the 19th century.[9] I explore these ideas further and reflect on the contradictory role of the mother through the collusion of totalitarianism and the supernatural in the film *Under The Shadow* (2016).[10] The film highlights the way gender, social reproduction, and childhood is constructed (and contested) under authoritarian regimes. Mbembe's critique of Foucault is important here as it highlights Western fascism's historical legacy in the very domination and control asserted on raced bodies during slavery and colonialism, and inextricably linked to capitalist production.[11] However the specific conditions of gender and social reproduction under western fascism and the contradiction between production for death and reproduction for life and death in Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy[12] are important for understanding current and historical culminations of the direct control or use of women's bodies and produce (children) as machines for capital, or machines for life and death. To illustrate these ideas and the role of children[13] as both symbol of life and bringers of death I will discuss Hanekes *The White Ribbon* (2009). This pro-natalism, which is currently echoed in US policy and Italian propaganda,[14] is called into question by the dialectical relationship between the biopolitical and the necropolitical, which is constant in capitalism because of the law of capitalist accumulation. Conversely I will ask if a queer[15] or non-reproductionist[16] reading of social reproduction under capital can offer an alternative reading for our current necropolitics and explore these ideas in relation to Jenkins *Moonlight* (2016) as an example of non-nuclear family, love and kinship both as a consequence of production/reproduction and resistive to capitalist logics of production/reproduction. [1] Mbembe (2003) [2] Bhattacharya (2013) [3] Here we could also consider Hegel's becoming subject in *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1991) that Mbembe also discusses in *Necropolitics* (2003). [4] See Fortunati, L. (1996) *The Arcane or Reproduction: Housework, Prostitution, Labour and Capital*, Autonomedia and Federici, S. (2004) *Caliban and the Witch: Women the Body and Primitive Accumulation*, Autonomedia, and Dalla Costa, M. R. (2004) *Capitalism and Reproduction in The Commoner*, Autumn/Winter 2004, and Vogel, L. (2013) *Marxism and the Oppression of Women* [5] Marx (1976) [6] Sohn-Rethel (1987) [7] Davis (1981) [8] Spielrein (1994) and Freud (1920) [9] Foucault (1976) [10] See Creed, B. (1993) *The Monstrous-Feminine: Film Feminism and Psychoanalysis*, Routledge, and McNally, D. (2011) *Monsters of the Market: Zombies, Vampires and Global Capitalism*, Brill [11] Mbembe (2017) [12] Horn (1995) [13] Ferguson's (2013) writing on capitalist childhoods in film is important here. [14] <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/italys-baby-making-campaign-fertility-day-birth-rate-an-angry-response-fertility-a7221321.html> [15] See Edelmans (2004) and Powers subsequent critique (2009) [16] See *Studies in the Maternal* (2014) Special Issue: Non-Reproduction.

## October 1917, Marxism and the Beginnings of Soviet Oriental Studies

**Craig Brandist (University of Sheffield)**

In the period before the October revolution few Russian Marxists focused their attention on the colonial world as such, rather than imperialism in general, and very few had knowledge of oriental languages. This changed dramatically after the October Revolution as the consolidation of Soviet power in the former colonies of the Empire and instability along the USSR's southern borders became urgent problems. To address the knowledge-gap, at the end of the Civil War the Commissariat of Nationalities established the All-Russian Scientific

Association of Oriental Studies (VNAV) within the Commissariat of Nationalities (Narkomnats), with leading figures including the Bolshevik Mikhail Pavlovich-Veltman the non-Party Vladimir Gurko-Kriazhin. VNAV aimed to develop the correct methods for the study of the socio-economic structure of the countries of the East (imperialism) and in so doing lay the basis for a coherent revolutionary policy toward the colonial world. Among the early works were important texts on Problems of the East based on studies of Soviet Central Asia by Georgii Safarov, Gurko-Kriazhins work on Turkey and Avetis Sultan-Zades work on Persia. Many other important works appeared in the pages of VNAV's journal *Novyi Vostok* (The New East). VNAV continued to exist until as an autonomous body until 1930 when it suffered the fate of many institutions at the time of Stalins revolution from above. This paper discusses the history of VNAV, considers its achievements, its complex relations with the old Russian orientalism that continued to thrive in the 1920s, its influence on the field, and the various compromises it was forced to make as time went on. We also consider the reasons for the demise of VNAV and how this laid the basis for a narrower and doctrinaire form of Soviet oriental studies that ultimately laid the ground for the rise of present-day postcolonial studies both as a form of continuity with and reaction against the Soviet Oriental Studies of the Stalin period and after.

## **Racial Liberalism and Its Discontents: Postracialism, Black Power, & Mental Labour**

**Michael Bray (Southwestern University)**

This paper argues that key dilemmas for anti-racist struggles in our postracial era can be illuminated through reconstructing 20th century struggles in the frame of the rising economic and political importance of the division between mental and manual labor. From the beginning of that century, both states and capitalists (if in somewhat different ways) initiated projects that, while offering welfare, also increased control over, both the labor process and the non-work, social-reproductive aspects of workers lives under the direction of knowledge workers. This Progressive approach initiated a long century of increasing, if altering, forms of professional-managerial direction of political and social life, in tandem with increasing economic functions of the state. A central contradiction in racist and anti-racist politics since World War II lies between liberal racialisms construal of racism within this broader social frame (viewing it as a psychological/moral issue to be addressed by social engineering overseen by liberal knowledge workers) and the central role in racist theories of an imaginary transcendence of the gulf separating intellectuality from the masses, as Balibar puts it. This professionalization of race relations produced differentiated effects across the racial categories it transformed and legitimated. First, as racialization becomes unevenly detached from color lines, as Jodi Melamed suggests, it shifts into partial congruence with the mental/manual labor divide itself. Professional people of color become (partially) white or multicultural; manual labor becomes racialized. Second, the real, if compromised, gains of liberal anti-racism produce new divisions within the middle and working classes: for those aided by that compromise (which remains under threat) a tentative alliance with liberal knowledge workers persists, fostering the de-radicalization of many anti-racist movements. For many whites, however, that compromise redirects resentment towards professionals, catalyzing racist theories centered on the collusion between the New Class and a racialized underclass. The paper concludes by staging an encounter between Nikhil Singhs suggestion that the Black Panther Party articulated a uniquely radical form of populism at a world scale and Cedric Robinsons critique of Black Power conceptions as leading inevitably to an elite-driven politics, speaking for a presumed commonality of black interests. Understanding this dilemma within the frame of the division between mental and manual labor allows us to understand the sense in which they

are both right, and something of the practical politics that might follow from that understanding.

## **Assimilating the Russian Revolution: Earl Browders Struggle to Americanise Communism**

**Laura Browder (University of Richmond)**

Earl Browder was the head of the Communist Party USA during its most influential period, the Great Depression. He coined the slogan Communism is 20th-century Americanism. He ran for president twice against Franklin Roosevelt and appeared on the cover of Time magazine in 1938. In 1946, on Stalin's orders, he was expelled from the Communist Party for revisionism. During those years, he was tracked by both the FBI and the KGB, and in the mid-1990s, the Venona project was published a series of KGB cables that identified him as a Soviet spy. The Bolshevik revolution had inspired him, yet as Browder later wrote, neither he nor the other founding members of the American Communist Party had even heard of Lenin before 1917. Following his first visit to the Soviet Union in 1921, Browder spent the next 25 years trying to Americanise the Russian revolution. He immersed himself in the great radical currents of his time, beginning in the 1910s as a syndicalist labour organizer and then as a war resister. In the 1920s, a period of great factional struggle in the American Communist movement, he worked first as a propagandist editing several Communist journals. The second half of the decade was spent in Moscow and Shanghai under the aegis of the Profintern, leading the underground Communist labour movement for all of Asia and editing the journal of the Pan-Pacific Trade Union Secretariat. After the trauma of Kuomintang repression he returned to the US, became CPUSA leader in 1930 and by 1931 was organising unprecedented anti-racist solidarity to assist the Scottsboro Boys a classic example of lynch-mob judicial racism against nine African Americans falsely accused of rape. He then theorised an American form of Communism based on Stalin's Third Period model of revolutionary patriotism. Cuban Communists looked back to Jos Mart, Dutch Communists studied William of Orange, and French CP theorists held Robespierre dear. Browder wrote extensively about Jefferson, Jackson, and Lincoln as antecedents but in terms more radical than his counterparts in other countries. During the 1930s and early 1940s, Browder was touted by the Comintern as one of the great Marxist thinkers of his time. Yet in pursuing his version of revolutionary authenticity, the fact that Jefferson was a slave-owner tended to get lost and the boundary between bourgeois reformers and communism became blurred. Browder got carried away by his enthusiasms, and was ultimately cast out of the international Communist movement. But in his struggles to avoid sectarianism in favour of ecumenical outreach, and in his attempts to merge internationalism with a deeply felt patriotism, we may find a path forward for a new generation of American radicals. At a time that popular fronts and intersectional, anti-racist politics seek and need lessons and perhaps even rootedness, the common-sense class analysis of Earl Browder, borrowed and retooled from Bolshevism, repays closer study.

## **Transcending Dualisms: Marx's Theory of Nature and Labour**

**Heather Brown (Westfield State University)**

Many Marxist and Marxist feminist scholars have begun addressing the question of environmental degradation under capitalism. This research, while eminently valuable particularly in terms of the study of particular environmental problems, has been limited by

its directly or indirectly dualistic framework which often separates nature from culture. This, I would argue, is even true of those deep ecologists and many ecofeminists who seek to bring nature back in as a subject. They tend to bend the stick a little too far in the other direction, recreating a similar, but mirror-image dualism between nature and culture. Through a study of his major works as well as his less-discussed works and research notes, I argue that Marx can contribute a great deal to the understanding of nature/culture divide under capitalism and provide a vantage point for thinking about alternatives to the more exploitative relations with nature. While Marx never made his theory of ecology explicit and what he does say in this regard is somewhat underdeveloped, there are a number of important fragments in his work that point to a theory of human ecological relationships that can become non-exploitative, albeit with some occasional dualistic formulations and elements that do not directly fit with ecological or feminist concerns of today. I argue that it is Marx's understanding of the temporary unity of human beings with nature through unalienated labor that is most relevant to ecology today. It is here that Marx is mostly able to overcome the dualism between humanity and nature without subsuming one with the other. Moreover, since it fundamentally relates to relationships among human beings as well, it offers the possibility of a theory of ecology that can account for both human effects on nature and the seemingly parallel oppression based on race, gender and class without privileging one aspect over the others.

## **Civil Society, Class, and Twenty-First Century Transformations in the UK**

**Karen Buckley, Global Development Institute, University of Manchester**

The twenty-first century has seen forms of organising on the Left that may give greater depth to Gramscian civil society and wars of position as serious contenders to global capital. Set against the liberal capacity thus far to propagate a voluntary and associational civil society of its own making, this paper returns to the politics of class through examining Left-styled responses to austerity emanating in recent times from Momentum and the World Transformed, the Peoples Assembly, and Kilburn Manifesto. It takes up different meanings attributed to austerity from cuts to public services; an entire remaking of education and health systems; and a political means of furthering longer-term dynamics. It examines a variety of strategies such as those centring on a new politics, a manifesto for change, and a peoples movement to end austerity. The remaking of civil society in Gramscian terms may, in this context, contribute to twenty-first century wars of position and transformations.

## **“Rebellious Realities” – Theoretical Synergies? Reading Marini Under the Sign of Uneven and Combined Development**

**Felix Buchwald (University of Sussex)**

The “rebellious realities” of postwar Latin America compelled dependency theorists to rethink core analytical categories of historical materialism. The Brazilian Marxist Marini, for instance, criticised the reigning orthodoxy for assuming the linear transition from absolute to relative surplus value to hold universally. Moving beyond the methodological

nationalism of Marx's Capital, Marini argued that the sui generis nature of Latin American development can only be understood from the "perspective of the system as a whole" - particularly at the international level. Here, unequal forms of exchange rooted in differential world development ruled out a replication of the British historical experience: in Latin America, capitalist modernisation meant super-exploitation and immiserating growth - not developmental catch-up. In contemporary IR, many of the issues that Marini grappled with are once again receiving scholarly attention. Recent debates over Uneven and Combined Development (UCD), too, have questioned unilinear conceptions of development and seek to re-conceptualise the social in the ontological plural. While the advocates of UCD have understandably sought to highlight what is distinctive about this approach an engagement with cognate Marxist theories is somewhat overdue. To this end, the present paper will seek to explore the potential for theoretical synergies between Marini and UCD. Both share an interest in how spatio-temporal difference undergirds interactivity and multilinearity. But while Trotsky's "whip of external necessity" is highly useful in capturing the military pressures facing late developers, Marini is right to argue that over time military violence has become progressively less important in upholding international hierarchies. Intermediary concepts like unequal exchange are needed if UCD is to appreciate how unevenness is reproduced on an economic basis through international trade. Marini's notion of super-exploitation and his analysis of structural heterogeneity should also open a new window into combined development, i.e. contradictory fusions of the "advanced" and "backward". Meanwhile, Marini's key concepts will be strengthened by deriving them from societal multiplicity, as opposed to (neo-)colonial difference: as the literature on UCD has shown, departing from multiplicity allows for a fuller appreciation of the "international", in that the latter, at the most basic level, is rooted in the co-existence of multiple societies, regardless of whether they differ from one another or not.

## **Ways out of Authoritarian Statism through Democratic Socialism - Poulantzas and The Case of Turkey**

**Rosa Burc (Research Assistant and PhD-Candidate at:  
Institute for Political Science and Sociology  
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Since winning the absolute majority in parliamentary elections for the first time in 2002, the AKP has articulated the vision of changing the governmental system into a presidential one. While the Turkish states first encounters with neoliberalism in the 1980s demonstrate an early birth of Turkish authoritarianism, this paper argues that the transition to authoritarian statism, as put forward by Nicos Poulantzas, has been fully solidified under AKP rule. While fascism to Poulantzas describes an exceptional condition, authoritarian statism, as he submits, has become inherent to capitalist modernity. Disguised as democracies in form of bourgeois republics, authoritarian statism finds its expression in shrinking political spheres, strengthening the state apparatus and assigning more autonomy to the executive powers. This paper aims to assess the recent authoritarian shift in Turkey from a Poulantzian understanding of the state, however in particularly focusing on the counter-category of democratic socialism he submits. Different to the Leninist approach, where the state can only be overcome by taking over the state apparatus, Poulantzas argues that due to state power relations, the state cannot be changed, unless the transformation comes from within, hence through the means of democracy. The practical prospects of the latter will be evaluated by assessing HDPs attempt at circumventing authoritarian statism in Turkey by (1) participating in representative politics as an alliance of systematically marginalised

groups of Turkish politics and achieving significant electoral success, and (2) developing grassroots structures based on civil liberties and womens liberation put into practice by bottom-up direct democratic structures. The concept of Democratic Autonomy therefore, proposed in form of a Declaration of the Political Solution, will be discussed within the dialectics of authoritarian statism and democratic socialism.

## **Rosa Luxemburg and the 'Woman Question': From the Theory of Accumulation to Social Reproduction Theory**

**Ankica Cakardic**

Rosa Luxemburg did not write many texts on the so-called 'woman question'. However, that does not mean that her work should be omitted from a feminist-revolutionary history. On the contrary, it would be highly inaccurate to claim that her works and, specifically, her critique of political economy lack numerous reference points for the development of progressive feminist policy and female emancipation, throughout history and today. With Luxemburgs *The Accumulation of Capital* in mind and her strong emphasis on the vibrant dynamics between capitalist and non-capitalist space, let us try to take Luxemburgs theory a step further. Is it possible to speak about Luxemburgian feminism? Is it possible to establish a connection between the Luxemburgian dialectics of spatiality and social reproduction theory? Can the framework of the Luxemburgian critique of political economy be used for the feminist analysis of womens reproductive work and its economic role in the reproduction of accumulation? In this paper the above questions shall be analysed in more detail through a) a presentation of Luxemburgs critique of bourgeois feminism and, subsequently, b) an established connection between crucial elements of Luxemburgs *The Accumulation of Capital* and social reproduction theory.

## **Redeeming Marxs Capital Theory of Value: From a Scientific to a Normative Critique of Capitalism**

**Bob James Cannon (East London University)**

*Capital* is subtitled a critique of political economy but Marx fails to complete this task. Instead, he combines a radical critique of political economy - grounded in values capacity to valorize itself - with a scientific critique of capital(ism) - grounded in labours capacity to produce value, borrowed primarily from Ricardo. As such, *Capital* is a hybrid work - characterized by tensions, inconsistencies and contradictions, which straddles two incompatible theories of value. Although Marx details the real subsumption of labour to capital, its success would undermine a labour theory of value. Consequently, with occasional exceptions, Marx renders labour ontologically impervious to its absorption by capital to the point of grounding value-production in isolated workers. This safeguards the integrity of labours value-producing powers to the detriment of a capital-theoretic critique of political economy. Equipped with a labour theory of value, Marx repudiates a moral in favour of a scientific critique of capitalism, which naturalizes the reification of value under capitalism, along with his own socialist values. To this extent, Marx(ism) fails to acknowledge either: (1) the normative tasks the market performs, or (2) the (modern) norm of self-determination he bestows upon labour. Fast-forward 150 years and Marxists cannot adequately theorize the 2007/08 financial crisis. Rather than comprising the absurd culmination of moneys (real) capacity to expand itself; Marxists fictionalize financial capital

on the basis of a real economy, in which value-producing labour dwells. As such, Marxists fail to do justice to the monetary imperatives that currently hold humanity in thrall. In contrast, a capital theory of value views value in monetary terms and money in normative terms. As a set of reified value-judgements capitalism imposes on humanity, which awards billions to a few and little or nothing to billions. From this perspective, economic-crises are also moral-crises, which manifest the folly of delegating economic decision-making to a profit-maximizing system. We can then view labour movement struggles as struggles to promote humanity's capacity to make its own value-judgements, currently usurped by capital

## **I Predict a Deliver-riot: Findings of a workers inquiry at Deliveroo**

### **Callum Cant**

This paper conducts a preliminary analysis of conflict between self-employed independent contractors and Deliveroo from September 2016 to May 2017, on the basis of a 9 month workers inquiry undertaken by the author. In doing so, it responds to the call by Jamie Woodcock for in-depth studies of workplace resistance in other contexts that can shed light on the contemporary challenge of organising (164, 2017a) and specific investigation of the political recomposition of workers in the gig economy (2017b). In order to do so the paper examines the role of proletarian documentary literature (Hastings-King, 124), rank and file syndicalism/unionism, and social movement participation in developing informal local and national disputes over wages and conditions. In conclusion, it proposes a revival of the concept developed in Italian operismo of the circulation of struggle as a way of conceptualising and strategising the struggles of workers subject to irregular (self)employment status and new forms of algorithmic labour management in platform capitalism (Srnicsek). References Hastings-King, S. 2014. Looking for the Proletariat. Leiden: Brill. Srnicsek, N. 2016. Platform Capitalism. London: Polity Press. Woodcock, J. 2017a. Working the Phones. London: Pluto Press Woodcock, J. 2017b. Deliveroo and precarious work: the labour process and the algorithmic Panopticon. [Unpublished manuscript]

## **Aleatory Materialism and Theoretical Practice: Struggle in the Later Althusser**

### **Thomas Carmichael (Faculty of Information and Media Studies University of Western Ontario)**

In a late unpublished text from 1985 or 86, *Les Appareils idéologiques et la Révolution Mondiale*, Althusser insists that the contemporary state can only be overthrown par ce que j'appelle la ruine contagieuse (au sens de Malebranche parlant de contagion des imaginations fortes) des touts [sic] les mouvements de masse existants, quelle que soit leur idéologie propre . . . (AIE Mondiale, 11). While the optimism in which Althusser couches this possibility perhaps indicates only how much the difficulties of his last years removed him from political realities, his affirmation of the political power of the coming together of mass movements returns us at the level of theory to the questions posed by *The Underground Current of the Materialism of the Encounter*. Recall that in the *The Underground Current*, the atoms pile up, they take hold or do not take hold and when they do, . . . il n'est de prise que sous la surprise (UC, 196) and that both the encounter and all that follows from it, even the laws that one might discern from the established fact that follows are haunted by a radical instability (UC, 195). As Althusser so memorably puts it,



That is, instead of thinking contingency as a modality of necessity, or an exception to it, we must think necessity as the becoming-necessary of the encounter of contingencies (UC, 193). But what of this taking hold? In this context, the coming together of existing mass movement through the contagion of strong imaginations can be read as the arch descriptor of the practice of aleatory politics and, in many respects the conclusion of a life-long struggle to think the dynamics of the conjuncture apart from determinate structures, never mind the long detour, a struggle that can be found, as I have already indicated, in Althusser's earlier structuralist texts. My discussion then focuses on reconciling the early discussions we find, for example, in *Theory, Theoretical Practice, and Theoretical Formation: Ideology and Ideological Struggle* (1965) with the determinations in his late work, and with the works of the crisis of the 1970s, particularly the recently published auto-interview, *Les Vaches Noires*.

## **The Money Form as an Agent of Revolution Against Capital, or Capital Against Revolution? The de Brunhoff/ Berti Debate**

**Rebecca Carson (Kingston University)**

The role of money in Marxism has received relatively little attention. As Fred Mosely has claimed money is often taken for granted as a neutral form that translates from pre-capitalist history appropriated for capitalist purposes, while commodity receives disproportionate attention as constitutive of the dynamic of a capitalist mode of production. However, this focus on commodity without attention to its co-dependence on money makes it difficult for us to understand the role of finance today. In light of this, this paper will focus on a debate that emerged between two exceptions to the suppression of an analysis of the role of money, Primo Maggio working group on money and French Marxist Susan de Brunhoff. Each representing disconnected bodies of post-Marxian literature that weirdly came into contact with one another over the pages of a 1975 issue of the *Operaismo* journal Primo Maggio. The key to the debate between the Primo Maggio working group (whose position was represented in an article written by Lapo Berti *Denaro come Capitale*), and de Brunhoff, is their differing positions on what constitutes money. The point of contention occurring when we aim to understand what happens to the relationship between value and labour with the abolishment of the gold standard. The crux of their dispute is based on how a Marxian analysis might deal with the movement from a commodity-money system to a state-credit monetary system. This having significant implications on how we understand what role money plays in the relationship between finance and production. According to Berti et al with the fall of the gold standard, money was freed from conversion to a commodity standard and therefore it became a maneuverable variable that functions as an instrument of governance. While on the other hand, for de Brunhoff because the role of money as commodity is a historical social form, the elimination of the gold standard does not change its formal dynamics. De Brunhoff is thus linked to the value-form tradition as, due to the strong analytic nature of her reading of money, her work represents the Hegelian logic used by Marx in her presentation of money and in doing so offers a detailed description of money as seen as a form determination of value. Berti and de Brunhoff thus represent two desperate positions regarding the function of money that highlight a bifurcation in theoretical positions within predominant post-Marxian readings of the implications of financialization: the post-autonomist tradition on the one hand and the value-form tradition on the other. These two theoretical presuppositions carry very different understandings of the political implications of money; money as capital entailing the latent possibility of a political subject that is able to command class composition vs. money as a value-form determination that confirms subjection to the abstract domination of the value

form. Money understood as a form determining revolution against capital on the one hand, and capital against revolution on the other.

## **Capitalist Neurons? Mindfulness, Neoliberal Affect and the Human Brain**

**Antonio Carvalho (Centre for Social Studies, University of Coimbra)**

Over the past three decades, psychologists, neuroscientists, phenomenologists and educators have displayed a growing interest in mindfulness, a contemplative practice which aims at enhancing the experience of the present moment. Scholarly literature suggests that mindfulness improves self-control, objectivity, affect tolerance, flexibility, equanimity, concentration, mental clarity emotional intelligence, kindness, acceptance and compassion. Mindfulness triggers significant changes in the human brain which have clinical implications, reducing automatic affective processing, altering ones relationship to pain and leading to the cultivation of compassion. Nowadays mindfulness is considered a priority for implementation by the National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) in the UK and many departments of psychology and neurosciences are now actively researching mindfulness. In this talk I will explore the articulations of mindfulness, neoliberalism and medical imaging technologies. The first aspect to be tackled concerns the ethical and aesthetic reconfigurations undertaken by these contemplative practices. Mindfulness consists of a series of technologies of the self which require a number of ethical transformations, namely specific ways of attending to emotions, thoughts and sensations, as well as a number of everyday life and moral changes. Simultaneously, mindfulness triggers a new aesthetics of existence which turns ones life into a permanent battle to attain particular forms of affect. If the effects of mindfulness are examined through medical imaging techniques, relying on the visualization of the human brain, how do these material technologies such as fMRIs - reshape our understanding of the good life, well-being and happiness? How are contemporary ethicalities transformed and supported by a network of visualization devices which allow the real-time representation of mental states? The second aspect to be explored concerns the politics and ontology of mindfulness. It has been argued that brain plasticity goes hand in hand with neo-liberalism (Pitts-Taylor, 2010). Mindfulness is a good illustration of the neoliberal focus on self-improvement it consists of a set of technologies of the self whose effects are vindicated by research relying on the assumption that the brain is flexible. How exactly are contemporary medical imaging techniques and representations of the human brain mobilized to justify new forms of self-control and how has this resulted in the neoliberalization of mindfulness? How was mindfulness captured by governmentality devices through contemplative neuroscience and the visualization of the human brain? By exploring these topics, this talk will analyse the ways in which neoliberalism relies on devices of self-control and technologies of [inner] representation to promote mindful forms of affect, examining how the dissemination of these technologies of subjectivity can be understood as a trope that problematizes the ramifications of capitalism, selfhood and wellbeing.

## **'History and Class Consciousness' and French Marxism**

**Conall Cash**

The most prominent Marxist intellectuals in post-1945 France attacked the Lukács of History and Class Consciousness from opposite directions. Condemned by Althusser for

its “idealist and voluntarist interpretation of Marxism as the exclusive product and expression of proletarian practice,” it was attacked by Sartre for its “objectivism” which “obliterates all subjectivity.” If the prominence of structuralism in France from the early 1960s rendered the ideas of class consciousness and reification anathema, the methodological individualism of Sartre was equally unable to accept them. Merleau-Ponty’s brilliant yet elliptical reading of the mid-50s, framed as it was within a narrative of Marxism’s hardening into a scientism since the decline of the revolutionary hopes of the period after World War One, and a polemic against Sartre’s turn to “ultra-Bolshevism,” remained largely unrecognised. We can however identify a ‘hidden tradition’ within French Marxism, of **■** **■** intellectuals who drew upon the early Luk**■**’s critique of reification and theory of imputed consciousness, as resources for refusing both the Althusserian renunciation of a collective consciousness rooted in social experience, and the Sartrean reduction of human freedom to the individual. Kostas Axelos, Lucien Goldmann, and Joseph Gabel each drew on Luk**■**’s text in their efforts to form a counter-current within French Marxism during the intellectual height of structuralism and the continued prominence of the Communist Party, while Edward Said’s suggestion of its influence upon Frantz Fanon’s *Wretched of the Earth* shows its pertinence to the analysis of race and colonialism. This paper will draw on these theorists’ engagements with Luk**■** and suggest the relevance of his understanding of the antinomies of bourgeois thought to the critique of the very forms of Marxism that came to prominence in the post-World War Two period.

## **Marx and Conceptual Art: Art and Language in the Late 1970s**

### **Kim Charnley**

Many of the artists that are linked to Conceptual Art drew heavily upon Marxist analyses of culture. This aspect of conceptual art is generally understood in terms of the influence of the New Left, but it is rarely examined in detail. The collective Art & Language has a place in the canon of Conceptual art on the basis of early work, none of which is explicitly politicized. In the 1970s, however, in a period of internal upheaval for the collective, Art & Language rethought conceptual art in relation to Marxism.

Their project is interesting, in part, because it resisted the dominant intellectual fashions of the period. They termed the theorists of the New Left ‘expensive Marxism’. Semiotics was ‘the French disease’. Their excoriating analyses of October, John Berger’s *Ways of Seeing* and the photoconceptualism of Victor Burgin – among other entertaining broadsides contained in the journal *Art-Language* – are notable for a rigorous engagement with aporiae of Marxist theory, especially problems of structure and agency in class politics.

An under researched example of the critique of bourgeois institutions, Art & Language’s position remains instructive for materialist engagements with culture. The reading of their work advanced here forms part of a project to understand global conceptualism from the point of view of its engagement with Marx’s theoretical legacy.

# Degrowth-Related Thinking in Russian and Soviet Thought

## Ekaterina Chertkovskaya

While the international debate on degrowth has been on the rise in recent years, it is almost unheard of in Russia, where problems like corruption, limited freedoms (e.g. of speech and peaceful demonstration) and the lack of representative democracy are framing the critical discussion of the current political situation. Addressing these problems is definitely important, but may be rooted in particular ideas of good life, including those positioning economic growth, productivism/consumerism and the economy – in case of Russia, fossil- and extractivism-dependent – as central to it. At the same time, in starting the discussion on degrowth, it is important to not simply apply the ways of thinking that have been key for degrowth so far to the Russian context, but – in dialogue with them – to search for connections to degrowth in the intellectual tradition of this space. This is exactly what I aim to do in this presentation, hoping that such an approach would both enrich the degrowth discussion and help to come up with ways of referring to it that would be comprehensible within the Russian context. Guided by this, the current presentation will trace degrowth-related thought in the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union. From pre-revolutionary time, the work of Sergei Podolinskiy (which included energy in Marx's theory of value), Pyotr Kropotkin (e.g. on mutual aid) and ethico-political writings of Lev Tolstoy (e.g. on non-violence) will be of particular interest. From the Soviet times, connections will be made to Alexander Chayanov's work on the peasant economy and the work of Soviet ecologists.

# The Hypothesis of Today's Insuperable Immanent Barriers to Capitalist Production and a Discussion of Some its Implications

## Franois Chesnais

The length of the global economic and financial crisis has slowly seen the start of a discussion on the future of capitalist production, on whether capitalism has reached the end of its use-by date. Roberts (2016, chapter 13). The issue is that of the systems capacity for expanded reproduction on the basis of its historically determined social relationships of production and laws of motion. I will approach the question through the proposition famously made by Marx in chapter 15 of volume 3 of Capital that capitalist production seeks continually to overcome its immanent barriers, but overcomes them only by means that set up the barriers afresh and on a more powerful scale. The examination of whether capitalism is reaching a point where it will no longer be able to overcome even temporarily these barriers involves two different terrains. The first is quite classical. In the setting of the full establishment of the world market and the impossibility of outward expansion to a yet in-completed world market, still topical at the time of Grossmans formulation of the breakdown theory (1929), the barriers to be overcome are really and fully immanent. They pertain to the factors commanding the movement of the rate of profit and so the amount of surplus value created in production, as determined by the organic composition of capital. Today the key issue is whether the increase in the rate of exploitation of variable capital and the fall in the price of constant capital are strong enough to offset the scale of the present and future substitution of capital for labour through robotisation. The issue was raised by Mandel with respect to what he named robotism as early as 1986 (Preface to Capital vol. 3 in the Penguin Edition) but never discussed. Today the discussion cannot be

put off. I argue that due to the effective increase in labour substitution, a high degree of insufficiency in the amount of appropriable surplus value, e.g. surplus value produced and realized, underlies the crisis. The second issue is that of the hitherto centrality for the future of capitalist production of resource depletion and inaction in the face of the speed and implications of global warming. We cannot continue to leave ecological Marxists take care of the issue, capitalism's second contradiction (O'Connor, 1988) being still read by many Marxist economists as a secondary one. The aggregate behaviour of corporations as determined by their call on energy and raw materials and their imperative to produce and sell commodities with exchange but not use value demands that capitals heedless race to ecological crisis if not catastrophe be treated by economists as rigorously as the data permits. The first contradiction must in turn be correctly defined, namely reformulated along the line just set out. It is not one of overproduction. The fact that capitalism's capacity for expanded reproduction on the basis of its historically determined social relationships of production and laws of motion is severely threatened, if not already impaired, will not jeopardize its existence as a system of social and political domination. But it will pose the bourgeoisie accentuated problems including the maintenance of social stability and civil peace in a context of permanent structural unemployment or again in coping with the ever-increasing migratory movements over the world. It heralds an accentuation of barbarism but does it for concrete perspectives of socialism in opposition? Are not revolutionaries faced with an issue which neither Marx nor Engels nor the great revolutionary theoreticians contemplated, that of the non-supersession of capitalism even as it brings civilization down along with its own slow collapse? In the last chapter of *Imperialism, the highest stage of capitalism* Lenin talked of private economic and private property relations (as) constituting a shell which no longer fits its contents, a shell which must inevitably decay if its removal is artificially delayed, a shell which may remain in a state of decay for a fairly long period (if, at the worst, the cure of the opportunist abscess is protracted), but which will inevitably be removed. Even if revolutionaries cannot be too sure about this, they cannot remain passive. Their responsibility is that of rethinking the formulation and articulation of their program. It will necessarily be defensive but must less than ever remain simply national.

## **Hong Kong's "Umbrella Revolution" as a Leaderless Movement: Lessons from Trotsky and Mao**

**Wai Kit Choi (California State University, Los Angeles)**

The series of uprisings that swept from the Middle East to Wall Street in 2011 are often described as embodying a leaderless form of organizing. To some, Hong Kong's 2014 Occupy Movement, also referred to as the Umbrella Revolution, embodied a similar logic of mobilization. With no centralized organizational structure, these contemporary movements are often thought to be a new form of politics that is far more participatory and spontaneous than the tradition of revolutionary communism inaugurated by the Bolsheviks in 1917. However, such a stark contrast suppresses the similarities between past and present revolts, and obscures how the experience of the former can still contribute to the latter. Consider the question of group cohesion within a leaderless movement; in the absence of a unified leadership as exemplified in Hong Kong's umbrella uprising, how then do different participants coordinate with one another to fight against a state apparatus that is hierarchically organized and disciplined? I will show how Trotsky's work on the Russian Revolution, specifically his idea of insurrection as an art, and Mao's writing on the construction of revolutionary base areas during the Chinese Revolution help answer this question. I will illustrate my theoretical analysis with observations from an ethnography that I conducted at one of Hong Kong's occupied sites over a ten-day period during which I witnessed the retaking of the street after the initial clearance by the police, as well as the

subsequent defense of the barricades from police advancement. By analyzing the Hong Kong Occupy Movement through Trotskys and Maos direct experience in movement mobilization, I show that there were also leaderless moments during the communist revolutionary wave in the twentieth century. Should a new round of global resistance erupt, a better understanding of the achievements and limitations of past revolts could contribute to its future success.

## **Epistemic Revolution and Counterrevolution. A Marxist Critique of Decolonial Reason**

**Alexandru Cistelean (Petru Maior University, Tg. Mures, Romania)**

My paper presents a Marxist or rather: historical materialist critique of decolonial theory. According to its main representatives (Mignolo, Quijano, Dussel), decolonial theory is something that further extends the insights of postcolonialism, yet should not be overlapped with it. Decolonial thinking is different from the postcolonial approach in at least two regards: first, in its institutional form, since, contrary to postcolonial theory, it is not confined or at least decently installed in the Western academia, but rather thrives on the free and non-institutionalized thought of the Global South; secondly, and more important, while postcolonial theory was mostly concerned with the concrete history of colonization, decolonial theory is more interested in the interior, psychic or mental frame of (self)colonization, a subjective condition which seems to be relatively independent and somehow more efficient of the material, objective structures of colonization. As such, the Marxist critique of decolonialism is significantly different than the Marxist critique of postcolonialism (as seen recently in Chibbers interventions). While Marxism shares with postcolonialism a common materialist paradigm, and their controversy is situated rather at a normative level (universalism vs. particularism), the point of divergence between Marxism and decolonialism is situated already at the level of their philosophical premises, and is practically an opposition between historical materialism and ahistorical idealism. This ahistorical idealism that defines the decolonial approach will be spelt out and criticized in three of its defining traits and strategic moves: a) the idealism of its understanding of the colonial condition, caused by the shifting of emphasis from the material history and social structures of colonialism to a relatively autonomous, subjective condition of (self)colonization; b) the idealism of its understanding of the history of colonialism, in which the idea and ideology of a presumed homogeneous West appears to be the driving force of a teleological and all-encompassing Modernity; c) the idealism and voluntarism of its political solution, in which a necessary epistemic revolution and changing of mentality is presented as the only chance for a more decent future.

## **Racial Anticapitalism: Detroit 1967**

**Joshua Clover (University of California Davis)**

Defined by the coexistence of militant black labor (DRUM, LRBW) and militant black power organizations (BPPSD), Detroit in 1967 with its crossed wires of strike and riot was both crucible and paradigm for larger transformation of capital and of anticapitalist struggle in the period, culminating in the Great Rebellion of 1967, whose 50th anniversary this talk marks. Within this history is the recognition that the racialized struggles of the Sixties (particularly raced black) were neither exceptional case nor subcategory of the long and broad insurgency against capital in the United States but its truth, wherein transformations

in the terrain and character of antagonism appear earliest and are registered most decisively. The goal this is to relocate black struggle as both central and more explicitly anticapitalist than has sometimes been suggested, recognizing in turn that in the context of the US and arguably beyond, anticapitalist struggle is always racialized.

## **Revolutionising Exploitation? Labour and Valorisation in the Digital Age**

**Matthew Cole (University of Leeds)**

This presentation aims to investigate the relevancy of Marx's concept of exploitation in the Twenty-First century. One hundred years ago, the world was undergoing seismic shifts in the technological and social organisation of production. Mass manufacture emerged as the dominant force of production, share of GDP, and the labour market. Since the 1970s, every advanced capitalist country in the world has gradually become a service economy when measured according to GDP and the share of employment by industry. Since the late 1990s, there has been a staggering amount of investment in digital technologies and infrastructure that has facilitated the automation of many labour processes. These technologies have simultaneously allowed for the transformation of every day human activities into digitally recorded and monetisable data; its collection is now standard business practice. The consequence of this is that increasing share of social interactions can now be subsumed into a valorisation process. What are the implications of these developments for the Marxist conception of exploitation and the capitalist mode of production? The concept of exploitation has a rich history in Marxist as well as non-Marxist political, economic, and social theory. These multiple and sometimes conflicting definitions often rely on different assumptions concerning power, labor, and economics generally. The presentation will first explain Marx's conception of exploitation and contextualize its development within the three volumes of *Capital* and subsequent debates. It will then discuss the political and economic implications of the current technological conjecture for labour and exploitation. I will focus primarily on the economic dimensions of exploitation because these form the material foundation for social relations. I argue that without a proper understanding of exploitation and its relation to the technological and social forces that enable it, there is no possibility of overcoming it.

## **History, Race and Politics: Reading Marx's Ethnological Notebooks**

**Emanuela Conversano**

My contribution aims to shed light on some controversial interpretations of Marx's stance towards historical and ethno-anthropological matters through the analysis of late Marxian studies on non-Western societies. No retrospective use of late Marx's research in order to explain his former position will be involved. My paper would rather concern a recognition of the specific difference of Marxian approach towards the problem of historical development and the role of single social forms. Moreover, a complete understanding of Marx's distinctive attitude only allows us to grasp the deep relations inside the contemporary society and provide a basis for political change. In particular, I would read Marx's *Ethnological Notebooks* and the related investigation of 1870s and early 1880s as a sort of critique of anthropology compared with Marx's critique of political economy, as regards the methods as well as the object. The later notebooks can be understood as a further example of Marx's genetic approach as opposite to a naturalistic view on modern

Western society that would not consider it as the historical result of contradictory dynamics between relations of production and productive forces. In other words, only starting from the theory of capital (which is not mechanical, in so far as it involves the subjects of historical relations) and the related dialectic and materialistic theory of history (the only one identifying the contradictions deeply rooted in society) in the late 1840s, Marx had been deepening his position towards the non-Western world and refining the conception of its role in relation to the historical process in his last years. It is certainly true as many scholars put it that there is an evolution in Marx's view of history and non-capitalistic societies. The reading of Victorian anthropologists and the contacts with Russian intelligentsia significantly contributed to increase Marx's knowledge of those societies and to hone a more complex view of history in terms of a multilinear development, by means of concepts such as *milieu historique*, *formation primaire*, *formation secondaire* [MEGA I/25, 217-241]. At a first glance, the critique of colonisation by English rogues and asses [L. Krader (ed. by) *The Ethnological Notebooks of Karl Marx*, Assen: Van Gorcum, 263] of late 1870s definitely reverses the judgement on barbarian nations of the 1850s. However, the later criticism of capital's domination over non-Western societies and the interest in their chances of development rests on a critical-theoretical basis the same on which the former judgment on the revolutionary role of the bourgeoisie in 1840s-1850s rests. Both are based on a dialectics challenge: i.e., putting together a theory of general historical progress and the comprehension of individual social formations and historical circumstances. According to such a theoretical standpoint, progress is not due to a fatalist *historique*, as it is in evolutionary theories, but it arises ultimately from the transformation of given conditions by the subjects of history. For this reason, Marxian theory needs to be repeatedly re-open to keep up with history; but, at the same time, it offers a sound theoretical frame for politics and praxis.

## **Gaze, Address, Interpellation: Rethinking Contemporary Theatre Production**

**Sophie Coudray (Universit Lyon)**

The aim of this paper is to analyse contemporary theatre production in light of concepts such as Althusser's interpellation but also gaze and address. In recent years, French academic Olivier Neveux set the stage for a political approach to theatre through the figure of the spectator<sup>1</sup>. My purpose is to extend this analysis by integrating certain theoretical elements which could contribute to a renewal of this approach. This paper will study image and discourse production through the gaze of the artist (whether or not the gaze was consciously adopted) and the way in which it interpellates us. As the linguist Jean-Jacques Lecercle has written: The image imposes itself upon the spectator, imposes upon her the story it tells, the myth that it bears and transmits<sup>2</sup>. On the premise that every gaze entails a specific address and, thereby, that this address presupposes its spectator, this paper aims to highlight the different stages constitutive of the interpellation process whose effects are, therefore, as Balibar puts it, undetermined until a given situation determines them<sup>3</sup>. I will analyse the use of such mechanisms in both culturally hegemonic modes of theatre production and subaltern or minor productions<sup>4</sup>. In doing so, I will use Gramsci's definition of catharsis as a political process in order to think the appropriation of the means of representation<sup>5</sup> as a crucial step in a project of social transformation based upon the self-education and self-liberation of the organised working-class movement<sup>6</sup>. <sup>1</sup>Olivier Neveux, *Politiques du spectateur: les enjeux du thtre politique aujourd'hui*, Paris, La Dcouverte, 2013. <sup>2</sup>Jean-Jacques Lecercle, *Adresse et interpellation*, Priode, <http://revueperiode.net/adresse-et-interpellation/> <sup>3</sup>Etienne Balibar, *Althusser's Dramaturgy and the Critique of Ideology, Differences*, vol. 26, n3, Durham, Duke University Press,



2015, p. 14. 4Jean-Jacques Lecercle, *Qu'est-ce qu'une langue mineure?*, Priode, <http://revueperiode.net/quest-ce-quune-langue-mineure/>. Lecercle borrows the meaning of minor to Deleuze and Guattari. 5I will refer here to Raymond Williams: *Means of Communications as Means of Production*, in *Culture and Materialism: Selected Essays*. London: Verso, 2005. 6Peter Thomas, *Historical-Critical Dictionary of Marxism*, *Historical Materialism*, 17, Leiden, Brill, 2009, p. 262.

## **Decolonizing Aesthetics: French Surrealism vs Colonialism**

**Sophie Coudray (Universit Lyon), Selim Nadi (Sciences Po Paris/Universitt Bielefeld)**

This paper aims to explore the issue of anticolonialism in the French Surrealist movement during the inter-war period, especially between 1924 and 1933, when surrealist anticolonialism was particularly active. Even if Surrealists only began to intervene into political issues in 1924, during the Rif war, the post-World War I artistic context, in France, was full of non-European influences. Indeed, the first exposition of negro art (art ngre) was held in Paris in 1919 and two years later (1921), Blaise Cendrars published his first *Anthologie ngre* by Editions de la Sirne. Besides it was also the time of a great interest for the French writer Franois Bonjean who travelled in Morocco, Egypt, India and who wrote extensively on Morocco and for Isabelle Eberhardt who leaved Switzerland in order to live in Algeria and who converted herself to Islam. This artistic and cultural context lead to something of a fascination for non-western Art sometimes driven by a kind of exotic depoliticization. It is in such a context that the French Surrealist movement developed itself. This paper aims to show the specificity of the Surrealist movement who used art to built a bridge between these Asian, African or Arabic art influences and the anti-imperialist movement that was developing at the same period. Our main thesis is that the Surrealist movement helped to politicize this non-western artistic influence and to put it in a broader anti-imperialist struggle that was going on not only in France especially through a lot of debates in the French Communist Party but also on a wider level through links with the League Against Imperialism for example. In sum, we could say that: in a context of development of an early third-worldism (tiers-mondisme) on the one side and of a European fascination for non-western art on the other, the Surrealist movement played a key role in building a strong political link between both sides, that is to say between a general interest for non-european art and a clear anti-imperialist politic.

## **Reevaluating Inessa Armand**

**Judy Cox (Labour Party)**

Armand is remembered through the prism of her relationship with Lenin. She is portrayed as his mistress and in political interventions she is 'Lenin's Cudgel' or 'Lenin's Girl Friday'. Armand is never shown as an autonomous political agent. The language used to describe her is highly gendered. This paper will focus on Armand's political development from feminist to Bolshevik. Armand left a body of work including a PhD thesis on free love from 1915, her articles in *Rabotnitsa* (in both 1914 and again after 1917), and her writings in *Kommunista*. The context of socialist attitudes to The Woman Question and the perceived dangers of feminist separatism will be discussed. Armand's role in the creation of *Zhenotdel* will be examined. Armand's views on feminism, the class basis of women's oppression and sexual liberation can usefully be compared to Kollontai's. Both took

important roles in debates about transforming the family, developing sexual freedom and creating the New Woman. There are only two English language biographies of Armand in publication, but there is a wealth of new material now available that can illuminate Armand's contribution to the revolutionary socialist understanding of women's oppression.

## **The Nature and Dynamics of Islamic Fundamentalist Movements**

**Joseph Daher (Lausanne University, Switzerland)**

Islamic Fundamentalist movements played throughout an important role in the different revolutionary processes that started at the end of 2010 and beginning of 2011 in the region of the Middle East And North Africa (MENA). The on-going dynamics and reality necessitates a reevaluation of some of the left's analytical understanding of, and strategic approach to Islamic Fundamentalism. Religious fundamentalism is of course not limited to the Islamic religion, and we can see common elements among various religious fundamentalist movements throughout the world. We will first analyze the use of Islamic fundamentalism as an analytical tool, although differences exist between various groups by pursuing different tactics and strategies to reach their objective. Some adopt a gradualist strategy of achieving their program within society first, and in the state thereafter, while others resort to terrorism or state implementation by force as is the case with the so-called Islamic State. We will observe the emergence of Islamic fundamentalist movements, which must be fully situated in the political, economic and social context of the contemporary period. The class basis of Islamic fundamentalism will then be studied, as well as their combined support to neoliberal policies and conservative moralism. The relations between regional and international actors with Islamic fundamentalist movements will also be examined. We will argue that both reformist and fascists characterizations of Islamic fundamentalist movements by various sections of the left do not able us to understand the nature and dynamics of these groups. We will suggest rather that Islamic fundamentalist forces are a second wing of the counter-revolution, in addition to the ancient regime. This argument does not mean however that they represent a similar danger, in terms of absolute capacities, than ancient regimes, at least when they are not in power.

## **Spontaneity and its Slippages: Lenin, Luxemburg and Beyond**

**Gareth Dale (Brunel University)**

HM 2017 is commemorating the Marxist legacy in revolutions of the past while thinking about present struggles. With this in mind, I propose to present an argument on spontaneity in revolutions and social movements. The paper will briefly survey the history of the rhetoric of spontaneity (including the German-Enlightenment discovery of spontaneity, a Scottish-Enlightenment interest in the spontaneous generation of social order, Herbert Spencers militant/industrial dichotomy, Hayeks ontology of cosmos and taxis and its mirror image: Karl Polanyis dichotomy of engineered market economy and spontaneous counter-movement) before turning to socialist debates of the early twentieth century. It will summarily dispose of the caricatures of Lenin and Luxemburg, (e.g. the notion that Lenins theory exemplified a rigid encoded binary with respect to spontaneity versus organization (David Snow & Dana Moss)) and will detour briefly through Elias Canettis idiosyncratic but highly revealing theses on crowd contagion, before turning to the more searching question of whether the spontaneity/organization dichotomy can serve a useful purpose in

analysis of social movements today. In answering this, the paper will draw on the work of and Jean-Paul Sartre and Antonio Gramsci as well as more recent contributions by Rick Fantasia, Naomi Rosenthal and Michael Schwartz, and Alex Levant. The argument is illuminated by references to a range of historical social movements, including the Russian revolutions of 1905 and 1917, the East German workers rising of 1953, Polands Solidarnosc movement of 1980-81, and the Egyptian revolution of 2011. [Im on research leave in AY2016-17, so will be able to present the paper on any day and will be able to attend the entire conference.]

## **The New Breaks Into the Old: Towards an Understanding of the Socialist New**

**Joe Davidson, Simon Hannah (King's College London)**

The contemporary left in the UK is often criticised for being too conservative. It is argued that the left frequently settles for defending the gains made by the working class in past phases of struggles, and fails to put forward a new vision of society. Such left conservatism appears to contradict the historic commitment of socialists to what is qualitatively new. Consequently, in response, scholars and activists are calling for the left to embrace the new and stake out a claim on the future. However, these calls often fail to critically interrogate the notion of newness itself and how this notion relates to socialist politics. To address this deficit, we aim to develop an understanding of what is new in socialism. By drawing on the work of theorists Paul Tillich and Ernst Bloch, we argue that socialism posits something that is both unconditionally and contingently new. On the one hand, socialism names a form of society that leaps over the world as it exists currently and stands in complete contradiction to everything that has been up to that point. On the other hand, the socialist demand is always embedded in the concrete struggles of the day; that is, it offers something unique for the proletariat as it exists at a specific moment in history. The socialist demand, therefore, both remains the same, insofar that it posits something unconditionally new (the new for all time), and changes, insofar that it posits something transiently new (the new for that time). On this basis, it is possible to return to left conservatism. We posit that it emerges out the reification of a distinct historical new. What is in fact contingently new for socialism, the institutions and demands associated with the post-war period, is taken as the unconditionally new. By way of conclusion, we consider whether it is possible for the left to escape from this new that is for a time that has been and no longer for the now, and whether such an escape can be attempted without a revolutionary leap that breaks decisively with what has been.

## **Lukacs, Greenberg, and the Spectre of Trotsky**

**Neil Davidson**

For most of the twentieth century, the debate among Marxists over the relevance of art to socialist revolution centred on the respective merits of realism and modernism, most notably during the 1930s in the exchanges between Lukacs, Brecht, and various members of the Frankfurt School. There were, in the cases of both realism and modernism, theories which seek to explain how these movements were produced by certain historical developments, how they consisted of certain artistic practices and embodied certain cultural meanings. Since the 1930s and 1940s respectively, the dominant theories of realism and modernism have, however, also functioned as ideologies, representing in cultural theory the defence of existing class societies, a task which involves, among other things, prescribing what art can

and cannot do. This ideological role does not invalidate every aspect of these theories, it means that Marxists can neither adopt them directly nor simply invert their value judgements. They themselves must first be subjected to critical analysis. In short, neither realism nor modernism is necessarily what the ideologists of realism and modernism say they are. The question still remains of the extent to which realism and modernism themselves corresponded to particular stages in the development of capitalism (if indeed they do), and what this means for our attitude towards them. I want to approach the issue by way of a critique of the greatest twentieth-century defenders of realism and modernism; Lukcs, in the case of the former and Greenberg, in that of the latter. Trotskys ghostly presence is invoked here for two reasons. First, although Trotsky and Lukcs never directly engaged with each others positions, the formers work stands as a silent rejoinder to that of the latter, at least as relevant as the actual debates between Lukcs and Bloch, Adorno or Brecht. Second, although Trotsky had a perfectly coherent theory of art in general, he neither distinguished between realism and modernism, nor explored their respective relationships to capitalist society; his positions were, however, was developed by some of his American followers, above all by Greenberg, although their achievements have largely been ignored by later Trotskyists.

## **Uneven and Combined Development as a Universal Aspect of Capitalist Industrialisation**

**Neil Douglas Davidson (University of Glasgow)**

In the contemporary debate over uneven and combined development opinion among those who find the concept useful has broadly divided in two. One sees uneven and combined development as a process which only became possible during the imperialist era of capitalism, usually seen as beginning in the Great Depression of the 1870s, when geopolitical rivalry and colonial expansion partially extended industrialisation from the metropolitan centers to what we now call the Global South. The other sees it as a transhistorical or transmodal process which can be found throughout human history, although some adherents of this position accept that it only achieved a truly systematic character during the late nineteenth century. Although more sympathetic to the former position, I will argue in this paper that uneven and combined development can indeed be extended, not backwards through time, but sideways through space: in other words, whether the process has been generated in every society which has experienced capitalist modernity, rather than being confined to backward or underdeveloped areas. But if all societies which have undergone the impact of factories and cities have experienced uneven and combined development to some extent, with the important exception of England, which completed the transition to capitalism before these processes began, why then have they had such different outcomes, above all with respect to their propensity for revolution? The social and cultural experiences produced by uneven and combined development were similar across East and West, albeit to different degrees, but the class adversary and consequently the nature of the state was quite different. In a sense, it is where uneven and combined development is present but hegemony (in Gramscis sense) is absent that the conditions for permanent revolution arose. This suggests that there is no necessary connection between uneven and combined development and permanent revolution, as the former existed throughout much of the West for example in Italy even into the era of the Russian Revolution, without giving rise to the possibility of the latter. The paper concludes by examining the implications for contemporary politics.

# 'Every Day, Something Happens to Us': Realism at the Crossroads

## Gail Day

This paper sets out from the videowork *Manifestations* (2001/2) by the Radek Community, a Moscow-based collective (now disbanded). The work is comprised of a series of simple and repeated art actions with post-production voice-over. In a number of locations around the city, the Radeks 'appropriate' Moscow commuters going about their daily activities, subjecting the pedestrians to *déshabillage* and transforming an everyday activity into revolutionary symbol. As the group claimed, *Manifestations* demonstrates 'Marx's thesis about the genesis of the self-awareness of the revolutionary class, in action'.

The five-minute videowork captures a moment of transition: between the ironic attitude typifying international art of the late 20c (which found itself extended in the immediate post-Soviet context) and the turn towards those models of critical realism that have characterised much ambitious art practice in recent years. A ( 'mere' ) artistic gesture, I want to argue, begins to acquire more interesting registers - ones which precisely reflect on their own 'mere-ness' and 'gesturality', posing the problem social-historically, art-historically and politically.

## Notes on Competition, Credit System and World Economy in Marx's Capital

Janana de Faria (PhD candidate in International Political Economy at King's College London/ UK Lecturer in Political Economy at UFVJM/ Brasil)

There is a general consensus among Marxist scholars that Marx methodologically moves from the analysis of capital in general in Volumes I and II of *Capital* to the analysis of many capitals in Volume III. This is explained by the necessity of introducing the role of competition in the process of transformation of value into prices of production and hence to present the laws of distribution of surplus value. However, there are numerous passages throughout *Capital*, and particularly in Volume III, in which Marx is clear that the actual movement of competition lies outside our plan. This apparent methodological contradiction in *Capital* is rebutted by grasping how Marx conceived the full presentation of his social theory. Marx's method starts from the most abstract level of determinacy of social phenomena and gradually introduces mediating determinants to progressively reach the more concrete stage of the analysis. The question is: what is the object of analysis? It is argued in this paper that, from the start of *Capital*, Marx takes the global capitalist economy as the ultimate object of analysis, which has world money and the world market as its presuppositions. It is well known that Marx never completed his project on the Critique of Political Economy, which was (arguably) planned to cover besides *Capital* three more books: 1. The State; 2. Foreign Trade; 3. World Market and Crises. The most concrete level of the theory would therefore constitute the analysis of the determinants of market price movement as it appears under competition on the world market. In this sense, Marx posited competition in Volume III of *Capital* on a very abstract level as the general laws of distribution in its pure form. In other words, competition is treated through its role in the formation of social ideal averages that exert external pressures onto many capitals. In this process, the credit system plays a central role in agglutinating the total money capital and

facilitating capital flows within and between branches of industry. This helps bringing about the equalisation of the rate of profit and the formation of the rate of interest. Thus the money market is crucial for the working of the laws that dictate surplus value appropriation in competitive struggles among capitals and the whole process of capital reproduction. Although the real existing competition and the complete analysis of the laws of surplus value distribution worldwide cannot be found in *Capital*, the aim of this paper is to grasp the elements in *Marx's Capital* that recurrently anticipate although mostly in an unsystematic and sketchy way the relation between the money market and the state, this latter as an intermediary in the world market. This approach is intended to shed light on the intertwined national and international levels of capital competitive dynamics and on further theoretical development of finance in capitalist imperialism.

## **People of Java! The Russian Revolution has Lessons for You Too! Henk Sneevliet and Early Communist Anti-colonialism**

**Alex de Jong (International Institute for Research and Education)**

Dutch revolutionary Henk Sneevliet (1883 - 1942) was an influential figure in the international communist movement. His role has been described as that of a 'a founder-activist of three Communist movements the Dutch, Indonesian and Chinese', with 'a prominent role in the early years of the Communist International'.<sup>1</sup> In 1920, Sneevliet attended the second congress of the Communist International where he became secretary of the Comintern's 'Commission for Nationalities and the Colonial Question'. Specifically, he was tasked with supporting the young communist movement in China. Sneevliet had drawn attention with his interventions on anti-colonial strategy, which were based on his experiences in the Dutch colony the Indies (roughly equal to Indonesia today). Sneevliet's innovative proposals for communist anti-colonial strategy were later described as a precursor of the 'bloc-within-strategy'.<sup>2</sup> The specifics of Sneevliet's influence on the Comintern's anti-colonial strategy and its subsequent application, have been subject of discussion - but there is a consensus Sneevliet was a central figure in early Comintern policies regarding 'the colonial question'.<sup>3</sup> Sneevliet's role in these debates contrasts with his political history before his departure to the Indies in 1913. During this period, like many Dutch socialists, Sneevliet did not pay much attention to the 'colonial question'. Dutch socialism in general did 'not have a strong inclination to develop a policy concerning colonialism'.<sup>4</sup> This paper examines the rapid development of Sneevliet's ideas on the 'colonial question' during his five years (1913-1918) in the colonial Indies. It was during those years that Sneevliet, a founding member of the first Marxist organization in the Indies, developed the idea that in colonized countries socialists should work together with anti-colonial, nationalist movements, and not focus exclusively on working class organizations. Specifically, this paper looks at Sneevliet's experiences as a Marxist from an European imperialist power who worked alongside a multi-class anti-colonial movement and how this influenced his thinking on revolutionary strategy. <sup>1</sup>Michael Williams, 'Henk Sneevliet and the birth of Asian communism', *New Left Review* 1/123, September-October 1980 <sup>2</sup>Stephen Anthony Smith, *A Road Is Made: Communism in Shanghai, 1920-1927* (Honolulu 2000), p. 57. <sup>3</sup>See; Dov Bing, *Revolution in China: Sneevlietian Strategy* (Auckland 1968), A. C. Muntjewerf, 'Was There a "Sneevlietian Strategy"?', *The China Quarterly* No. 53 (Jan. - Mar., 1973), pp. 159-168, Dov Bing, 'Sneevliet and the Early Years of the CCP *The China Quarterly*, No. 48 (Oct. - Dec., 1971), pp. 677-697, Adrian Chan and Dov Bing, 'Chinese Evidence on the "Sneevlietian Strategy"', *The China Quarterly* No. 56 (Oct. - Dec., 1973), pp. 749-761 <sup>4</sup>Fritjof Tichelman, 'De sociaal-

democratie en het koloniale vraagstuk (De SDAP en Indonesie)', in: Mies Campfens, Margreet Schrevel, Fritjof Tichelman (ed.), *Op een beteren weg. Schetsen uit de geschiedenis van de arbeidersbeweging* (Amsterdam, 1985), pp. 158-71, there p. 158.

## **Notes on the Role of Women in Soviet Posters from the Second World War**

**Rebecca de Oliveira Freitas (Universidade Federal Fluminense)**

The current paper aims to comprehend the way in which the political positions of the Soviet Union were expressed through art. The analysis was produced over some propaganda material produced by the USSR during the Second World War. We aim to identify the elements that relate to the USSR's view of history and revolutionary strategy, highlighting the way in which women were viewed in these contexts. We approach culture from a materialist point of view, using Raymond Williams as reference. According to Williams, the relation of determination existing between infrastructure and superstructure must be comprehended, not as the imposing of a pre-established content, completely controlled, but as the existence of limits and pressure on the cultural sphere. This understanding could be taken as an emphasis over the social totality, but Williams adds that this approach to culture can only be done correctly by its combination with the concept of hegemony, elaborated by Gramsci. The understanding that the class domination doesn't effect itself only through coercive action, but also through a cultural ideological dominance is, therefore, also present in this paper. As for the soviet art of the period, we can highlight the growing presence of the style called Socialist Realism, also known as jdanovism. Far from restricting itself to the aesthetic sphere, it is possible to use it as a key to analysing the soviet view of the world at the time. Moreover, the material analysed enables us to see the role destined to women in that narrative. We can, therefore, relate this production to the reality of women under stalinism and the relations between class and gender established in that context. This observation points to a vision of women that restricts them to the role of mothers and wives, that is, a reproductive role only.

## **From Sisi to Trump: The State of Crisis**

**Brecht De Smet (Ghent University)**

In this paper I deploy the concepts of Bonapartism (Marx) and Caesarism (Gramsci) as an alternative and complementary framework to understand contemporary right-wing populism. Instead of conceiving of populism in terms of discourse or social movement dynamics, the phenomenon is connected to the global organic crisis of capitalism and changing configurations of class and state power – a perspective which I explored in my book *'Gramsci on Tahrir'* (2016, Pluto Press). The concepts of Bonapartism and Caesarism invite us to look at populism as a multilayered and multiscalar phenomenon, rooted in specific national and regional historical trajectories, crises and transformations of the global political economy, and the very nature of capitalist state and class power. Through the method of 'incorporated comparison' (McMichael 1990) I discuss two apparently disconnected cases of 'populism': the rise of the Egyptian strongman Abd al-Fatah al-Sisi and the election of Donald Trump as president of the USA. Although these authoritarian projects emerge from divergent national-historical lineages, their success reveals the global crisis of neoliberal hegemony: the unfulfilled promise of an 'organic

passage' of the masses into neoliberal civil and political society. Instead of the cosmopolitan neoliberal dream of individual, market-based political and economic participation, rightwing populism exerts hegemony through the construction of an explicitly negative national-popular myth based on fear and exclusion. I argue that this nightmarish vision is much more in tune with the de facto process of state securitization, which is, in turn, symptomatic of the forced return of the form of the state to its inner content: the open dictatorship of capital.

## **Play and Revolution. A Vygotskian Understanding of the "Festival of the Oppressed"**

**Brecht De Smet (Ghent University)**

In his 1905 pamphlet "Two Tactics of Social-Democracy in the Democratic Revolution" Lenin famously claimed that "Revolutions are the festivals of the oppressed and the exploited. At no other time are the masses of the people in a position to come forward so actively as creators of a new social order as at a time of revolution." The situationists reiterated this central idea by suggesting that "The commune was the biggest festival of the nineteenth century" (Debord, Kotnyi & Vaneigem 1962). Since then activists in the anarchist, autonomist, and broadly 'horizontalist' traditions have stressed the importance of playful creativity as a means to prefigure alternative societies. OWS, Indignados, Tahrir Square, and other moments of protest illustrate this claim. This paper investigates the notion of 'play' and its function within revolutionary protest from the perspective of Vygotsky's cultural psychology and his text "Play and its role in the Mental Development of the Child" in particular. The intuitions of revolutionary authors such as Marx and Lenin serve as a preliminary framework to transfer the idea of 'play' from the domain of ontogenesis to the field of sociogenesis. It is argued that for any social movement (or subject-in-formation) play, at a certain point, is a leading transitional phase, from which organizational and formal structures emerge 'spontaneously'. The imagination involved in play creates new needs, new concepts, and new practices, thereby pulling the social movement (or subject-in-formation) forward in its development.

## **Conceptual Hang-Ups: Or, We Need to Talk About Abjection in Marxist-Feminism**

**Amy De'Ath (Simon Fraser University)**

This paper is concerned with the emergence of the abject as a concept and analytical category in Marxian theory. Recent developments in communisation theory have entailed an assertion that abjection generally understood in relation to the socially-mediated category of relative surplus population is not a condition that categorically defines individual subjects, but mediates a diverse set of relationships to the wage across populations. In *The Logic of Gender*, on the other hand, Endnotes define the abject as a category of previously waged reproductive activities that have become unwaged as a result of neoliberal austerity measures; a particular type of denaturalised, indirectly market-mediated activity that must be performed or executed by someone in order for the production of surplus-value to continue in the directly market-mediated sphere. *The Logic of Gender* describes the abject as that which is cast off, thrown away, but from something that it is part of, and this essay's rendering of the abject shares key characteristics with Julia Kristeva's definition of abjection as the twisted braid of affects and thoughts that has no definable object, and which draws



us toward the place where meaning collapses. But Kristeva's famous 1980s writing on abjection points towards another dimension in which abject reproduction is performed, often under duress. This gendered abjection is of a kind qualitatively distinct from the definition Endnotes provide, and the most obvious examples of it involve the variously slow to spectacular forms of sexual and gendered violence to which feminized people are routinely subjected. The intellectual and affective responses to the dealing with these types of structural violence demand are a component of what Silvia Federici calls the psychological work necessary to reintegrate our physical and emotional balance. Abjection nevertheless seems to give conceptual shape to the misery of both low-waged feminized work and denaturalised (previously waged) reproductive activities. At the same time, it describes these two distinct yet overlapping phenomena at the categorial level, suggesting how they fit into a dialectical model of capital as an integrated totality. But can we really transpose the concept of the abject with all its psychoanalytic baggage into Marxian frameworks of analysis in this way? Or would this be to neglect the fact that concepts come with histories and limits of their own? This paper seeks to clarify the political contours and theoretical elasticity of the abject as a Marxian (and especially Marxist-feminist) category, while keeping open the question of whether it might better be substituted altogether.

## **Social Sciences for an Other Politics: Women Theorising Without Parachutes**

**Ana Dinerstein**

My presentation discusses the contribution of the edited collection *Social Sciences for an Other Politics: Women Theorising without Parachutes* (Palgrave MacMillan 2016) to the process of breaking new theoretical ground for Marxism and critical/radical theory. It discusses the current state of grassroots politics within the context of the extensive range of current and ongoing crises encompassing poverty and hunger; war and conflict leading to rape and death, it might be surprising to find that alternative political movements are mobilizing to create 'utopia' in a range of subtle forms. The argument is that there has been a major shift in grassroots politics which shows that these movements are not only mobilizing against ineffectual policy, the failures of representative democracy and the alienating nature of the economy, but they are opening breathing spaces through which to conceive and organise social life in new and alternative ways. Indeed, a myriad of knowledges and practices are developing in urban and rural areas to bring these to fruition. While often based in traditions of resistance, people are mobilising with new approaches to cooperative production and consumption, self-management and communal property; non-representational politics and anti-oppressive education. The question is how to understand the significance of these new movements and forms of collective action. The argument is that a new radical subject is in the making: it is plural, prefigurative, decolonial, ethical, ecological, communal and democratic. A critical theory should demonstrate those qualities, too. The book interrogates the concepts, methodologies and epistemologies that are able to grasp it. I will reflect on the shortcomings of theory in understanding these changes by arguing against the resistance of many critical a critical theory obsessed with negative praxis, the new radical theory explored in the book seeks to critique capital-coloniality-patriarchy by means of the affirmation of life. Affirmation is not the same as 'positive thinking' or affirmationism. It is a form of theorising that, driven by 'hope', ventures beyond the given offering epistemological, theoretical and empirical openings that reflect a prefigurative and 'experiential critique' that is already taking place at the grass roots. The presentation examines in what ways this book written by eleven female scholar-activists (Women on the Verge scholar activist group) working in Mexico, USA, Sweden, Australia, and the UK, opens an intellectual space where. It illustrates the arguments by

briefly presenting the alternative forms of theorising social reality explored in the book: 'learn hope' (Sarah Amsler, Lincoln, UK), by 'decolonise critique' (Sara Motta, Newcastle, Australia) and 'denaturalise society' (Ana C. Dinerstein, Bath, UK); the social (re)production of life, including women in development (Suzanne Bergeron, Michigan Dearborn, USA), the commons as the political (Raquel Gutiérrez, Lucia Linsalata and Mina Lorena Trujillo, Puebla, Mexico), and the culture-nature paradigm (Francesca Zunino, ILAS), and the dynamics of prefiguration by social movements, critiquing social movement theory in the process (Emily Brissette, SUNY Oneonta, NY; Marina Sitrin, SUNY Delhi, NY; Marianne Maeckelbergh, Leiden)

## Human Nature and Social Arrangements

### William Dixon (City University)

Social change must ultimately depend on human nature. Marx's treatment of the issue focuses on the interrelationship of social relations and nature. This understanding can too easily be interpreted as meaning that the individual is formed by existing social relations and that therefore while some species being exists human nature itself is malleable. The problem here is illustrated by a prevalent intersection of Marxism and Keynesianism that focuses on the macro-level of crisis. This supposes that the micro level of understanding does not translate to the social level so that ultimately there is no alternative to it except an understanding of the social. The result is an undeveloped understanding of human nature that is all the more curious since this was addressed in the scientist whom Marx most admired that of Charles Darwin. In the latter's *Descent of Man* Darwin identifies not just reason but more particularly language and a moral instinct as crucial to grasping human nature. Here we take up this insight to investigate recent efforts to develop an understanding of how human nature departs quite radically from the micro level of economics and indeed from a conception of a purely malleable social individual. We argue here then against taking a view of the individual from the point of view of the collective. Rather it were better to reconsider the collective from the point of view of the individual but to do so with a proper understanding of humans as having an inherent, evolutionary and explicable ability to sustain social relations.

## Prosthetic Capital: On the Fungibility and Rebellion of Bodies

### Sam Dolbear (Birkbeck), Hannah Proctor

In the political newspaper *Die Aktion* in 1920, the Dadaist Raoul Hausmann published a text entitled *Prothesenwirtschaft: Gedanken eines Kapp-Ofziers* [The Prosthetic Economy: Thoughts of a Kapp-Officer]. The text imagines a reactionary officer's defence of a post-war economy built on prosthetics. The prosthetic wearer, the officer proclaims, understands that their body is still useful. The prosthetic wearer, the officer proclaims, is a moral citizen, integrated into society and prepared to work in the face of personal and national adversity. As such, they escape the freak show, a life dependent on the state and its institutions, and a life on the streets begging with barrel organs. The work-discipline of this functioning citizen also prevents from dangerous rebellious activity against their experience and the state. The prosthetic itself, the officer proclaims, can be abandoned to wear and tear. Given their limbs never exhaust, the working day can be extended absolutely and intensified relatively. The prosthetic, the officer proclaims, makes the body adaptable to specific tasks in particular work places. Limbs are rendered totally fungible under capital. This also means

prosthetics can be damaged without pain. Boiling water can be poured over them. Shots pass through painlessly. As such, prosthetics are an essential tool for a future Great War. In the aftermath of the First World War, a reserve army of labour returned from the military front, physically mutilated and psychologically shocked. This paper will address the confluence of war and capital through the development of the prosthetic industry for the reintegration of workers into the economy. Into the twenties however, the prosthetic took on a new form, framed as an instrument of rebellion against conformism, exploitation and domination. On the one hand, the prosthetic economy stood for the artificiality and hollowness of the bureaucratic state and the melancholia of the damaged body forced to assimilate into the productive economy. On the other, the cyborg body sought to overcome and revenge the melancholia that resulted from the experience of war through a kind of mutant rebellion. In 1931 Walter Benjamin wrote that in the Mickey Mouse films mankind makes preparations to survive civilisation through a new creaturely life. This survival, as I will document through film, art and literature in this paper, propelled this survival through the creation of a new world, outside the violence of work and industrial capital.

## **The Contradictions of Neoliberal Islam in Turkey**

**Sabine Dreher (Glendon College, York University)**

The Gulen community from Turkey has pursued an aggressive policy of globalization by focusing on the establishment of private schools financed through fees or, as in the United States, through state subsidies via the charter school system. This has allowed the movement to create market opportunities for its many small and medium sized firms who profited from a protectionist industrial policy at the school level where contracts were given preferably to movement firms. As a result the movement was able to finance its globalization in more than 140 countries starting in the 1990s. Its religious dimension, the offering of interfaith and intercultural dialogue activities made it attractive to western elites looking for a more peaceful version of Islam after 9/11. This neoliberal globalization project distinguishes the movement from the other Islamists fractions in Turkey who were more regionalized or stayed at the national level. This differential spatial orientation may explain in part the conflict among the various islamic capitalist fractions in Turkey. The globalization project of the community came to a crushing halt since December 2013 when the movement started to loose its power struggle with the governing Islamist fraction under the leadership of the Justice and Development Party. Most research describes the movement as a transnational civil society organization in search for peace and dialogue among religions and most western governments now support its power struggle against Erdogan for example through the offering of asylum of persecuted movement members. There is a willingness to overlook the non-democratic traditions and the political dimension of the movement as it is seen as one of the key enemies of Erdogan. The goal of the paper is to look at the political project of the movement for Turkey and how it created contradictions with its global neoliberal project. In addition, it will be shown that it is better portrayed as a key member of the Turkish elite and involved in the struggle for power as Mustafa Sen based on Jessop's state theory has argued. Jessop's notion of 'state project' will be interogated here for its usefulness. The paper will thus shed light on the intra-islamist power struggle in Turkey and its geo-political dimensions through Gramscian state theory. The paper further develops previous research (see attachment)

## **Sexual Politics, 1917/2017: Proletarian Morality - and Beyond?**

**Peter Drucker (International Institute for Research and Education, Amsterdam)**

The centenary of the October Revolution is a good occasion to remember the largely forgotten wealth of sexual politics produced in the revolution's first decade. Kollontai's work is still an extraordinary source of insights into such contemporary issues as polyamory and gendered desire. The Bolsheviks' record on same-sex practices still sheds light on LGBTIQ debates today. In some ways looking backward can restore a grievously neglected class outlook to sexual politics and bend the stick towards collective solutions. Yet clearly Bolshevik sexual politics suffered from all sorts of limitations: failure to support self-organization; rejection of feminism; uncritical reliance on science; and productivism. Today, moreover, in a class landscape fragmented and twisted by the neoliberal offensive, we need to ask: can a working-class-identified sexual politics still stake a plausible claim to hegemony in movements for sexual liberation? Or if not, what is to be done?

## **Rediscovering the Legacy of Revolutions for Marxist Feminists: a Focus on Ireland**

**Penelope Elizabeth Duggan (Institute of International Research Education, Amsterdam)**

The early years of the twentieth century were a moment of revolutionary upheaval in Europe. This turbulence affected the British colony of Ireland provoking not only labour and nationalist unrest but also the struggle for women's rights and a cultural flowering. Women were in the forefront of all these different movements but their horizons were not confined to Ireland. They were linked to the class oriented sections of the women's movement in Britain. They supported the Indian independence struggle as one colony to another. They followed what was happening in Russia. The talk will present an overview of how women were active but subsequently sidelined as leaders of this movement; how the strong Catholicism of much of the nationalist movement played its role in this, as did the physical force tradition of the Irish movement.<sup>2</sup> The Legacy of Alice Milligan: Protestant, Feminist, Modernist and Unrepentant Fenian Alice Milligan, as a key figure in the Celtic Revival was instrumental in shaping a modern Irish identity that looked to ancient, Irish Ireland for its iconography. But perhaps more than most of her contemporaries, she was a very conscious proponent and committed practitioner as both artist and activist to an egalitarian, participatory approach that defined everything she did. Alice believed very strongly in the importance of ordinary people, and the responsibility of people to act on their own behalf and on behalf of their country and by becoming educated in Irish history and literature. Alice wrote, Who is there that has not power to accomplish something? Alice Milligan's artistic practice was global as well as local, rural as well as urban. She promoted Irish culture within a context of anti-sectarian activism that was communitarian and that developed out of a feminist and modernist consciousness. (Catherine Morris) The talk will review the life and work of Alice Milligan, cultural and political activist, her ideas and models of participatory artistic practice that have resonance and relevance today.

# Why Dont We Get Indignant? Reflection on the Revolution and its Obstacles from an Affective Point of View

Arthur Duhe (The University of Oxford)

The world in which we live has reached a disastrous level of inequality and economic violence, however, no clear revolutionary movement can be perceived. This paradox is part and parcel of any revolutionary agenda, and undoubtedly, diverse perspectives may be adopted here to explain the relative weakness of the revolutionary attempts to abolish the reign of Capitalism. I would like to focus on the affective dimension of the issue, which echoes the affective turn occurring in the social sciences, including in the recent literature on Capitalism.<sup>1</sup> This shift of perspective will lead us to two puzzles: first, what does it change or add to consider the revolution from an affective point of view? Second, how does it help us to understand better the obstacles faced by revolutionary movements? To respond to these questions, I will first consider the notion of indignation, which has been used by political agents (los Indignados in Madrid, for instance), by essayists (Stphane Hessels Indignez-vous !), and by scholars (Michael Hardt and Antonio Negris Commonwealth, or Frdric Lordons Willing Slaves of Capital). In order to specify the meaning of this term, I will use here the definition made by Spinoza - whose theory of affects has recently been backed by neurologic studies -.<sup>2</sup> Indignation could therefore be summarised as the affect felt by A when A witnesses B, unknown to A, affecting negatively C, also unknown to A but appearing to him or her as being alike.<sup>3</sup> Interestingly enough, Spinozas indignation is therefore not a reaction against a direct threat or enemy but implies representations which flesh out the social relations. Applied to our paradox, this shift is crucial as the revolution is not perceived as a conflict between the ones benefiting from capitalism against the ones losing from it, or, in other words, as the opposition between the bourgeoisie and the proletarians, but rather as a conflict between those who are perceived as the persecutors and those who, feeling empathy with the ones perceived as victims, stand against the former. On this basis, four causes explaining the absence of indignation may be analytically deduced, that is to say: 1. B has already affected positively A, so that A is not neutral anymore; 2. C has already affected negatively A; 3. A does not perceived that B is saddening C; 4. A is affected with indignation but this affect is counterbalanced by other affects. These four causes constitute a starting point to explore how Capitalism uses the affective mechanisms in order to undermine the potential protests against its order. 1 See for instance Illouz, E. (2007) Cold Intimacies: The Making of Emotional Capitalism. Polity Press; and Marazzi, C. (2011) Capital and Affects: The Politics of the Language Economy. Los Angeles: The MIT Press. 2 Damasio, A. (2003) Looking for Spinoza: Joy, Sorrow, and the Feeling Brain. Harvest Editions. 3 Ethics, III, 27, cor. 1

# We Need to Talk About Milo: Queer Marxism and the Alt Right

Alex Dymock (Royal Holloway, University of London)

The insurgence of the Right and Alt Right on both sides of the Atlantic has heralded an increasing dismissal of so-called cultural politics on the left, wherein scholars and activists have begun to repudiate the supposed privileging of identity politics over political-economic solidarity, and blame the disparate agendas of feminist, queer and anti-racist activists for the rise of the right taking centre stage in this debate. Representatives of the Alt Right, who

resemble the scandalous Milo Yiannopoulos, the self-styled provocateur, have urged that the left made homosexuality boring, and that the rise of the right should be celebrated for its ability to bring troublemaking back to gay life. What is notable about these provocations and indeed their status as pure antagonist is their peculiar proximity to the antisocial queer thesis, the strand of queer thought that emerged in the late 90s and early 00s as an antidote to an increasingly rights-orientated and assimilationist body of work centring on the recognition of LGBTQI+ people as good citizens. In this paper, we consider the relation between Alt Right subjectivities expressed in right extravagant personas in the vein of Milo Yiannopoulos and Roger Stone as gay fascist sophisticates (MacDougald 2016) and the antisocial queer thesis. While neither studies of the relationship between sexuality and fascism, nor critiques of antisocial queer theory, are new, we ask whether Milo, Roger and this emerging Alt Right gay discourse constitute the ultimate sinthomosexual (Edelman 2004), the embodiment of the antisocial thesis logical ends, and what this might mean for the future of queer Marxism in the political present.

## **Rethinking Patriarchy in Relation to Social Reproduction**

**Hester Eisenstein (Queens College and the Graduate Center, The City University of New York)**

In this paper I want to look at the recent history of the concept of patriarchy in relation to the new literature on social reproduction. The word patriarchy was central to the theorizing of second wave feminism in the 1970s, and indeed was part of the debate over whether the oppression of women was primarily due to patriarchy or to capitalism. In recent years Marxist feminists have turned their attention to the issue of social reproduction, and the ways in which the role of women in childbearing, childrearing, and the social institutions such as education and healthcare are essential to the reproduction of the contemporary form of capitalism. Silvia Federici has suggested that in the recent history of the west there have been at least three forms or phases of patriarchy: male control over women's work in the cottage industry that preceded factories; the rise of the factory system and the introduction of the family wage; and the massive entry of women into the paid workforce since the 1970s. She argues that patriarchal control of women has adapted and shifted with each of these phases in the capitalist mode of production. Building on this periodization I want to raise the question of whether, as we turn our focus to the analysis of social reproduction in the contemporary period, we are seeing the rise of new forms of patriarchal control.

## **The State, Women, and Religion**

**Baraneh Emadian**

Liberals in both the global North and South tend to regard religion as a source of women's oppression, whilst attributing an epiphenomenal role to the state in comparison. This paper argues that the lens has to be shifted from religion towards the state. In other words, as long as religion is not instrumentalised by the states, it may even contribute to emancipation. This could be traced in the history of Christianity where religion as politics had been operative in the Anabaptist and Hussite movements in which women played an active role, received education and military training, and even took part in anti-establishment rebellions (the Hussite wars that followed the execution of Jan Hus). Yet, once serving the emerging European capitalist states and primary accumulation of capital, Christianity became an organ of suppression of women as evident in the witch-trials and the Inquisition at the end of the 14th century (Federici). To fast forward the historical tape to

our current situation, we come upon countries such as Iran and Saudi Arabia in which Islam is a state religion, where we encounter practices akin to the European Inquisition.

If Marxist theorists merely look at Islam from a Western perspective and bracket its persistence as an authoritarian state religion in contemporary nation-states, they fall into the trap of Eurocentrism and fail to grasp the nuances of the convoluted relation between state, religion, and the plight of women in global terms. Implicit in the category of Hijab is this very complexity: Hijab is not only a voluntary, cultural choice (as it is in Western countries); rather, there are millions of women in the Middle East who live under the states in which rejection of Hijab is tantamount to a death sentence. If theoretical reflection and analysis focus on one side/world and bracket the other, they fall short of grasping the truth of the situation, that is, the cleavage between two opposing moments or instances: what is renounced (France) and imposed (Iran, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates) by 'the states'.

Through a comparative reading of the situation in contemporary France, Iran, and Saudi Arabia, this paper confirms the thesis that extreme Laïcité and religious state meet dialectically. Less visible, however, is what these two seemingly diverging forms of the state have in common; they transform the presence or absence of religious belief into a positivity, hypostatized and essentialised. The state masks the truth of both religion and Laïcité as ruptures or disruptions in cultures and dominant ideologies. Once hypostatized into a totality, both religion and Laïcité become accomplices to the state, digesting all difference and reproducing unity, totality, and identity, namely, the logic of the state.

## **State and Labour During the AKP Rule in Turkey: A Balance Sheet of 15 Years**

**Mehmet Erman Erol (Ordu University)**

The AKP (Justice and Development Party) is in power in Turkey since the November 2002 elections. This era brought about significant changes and transformations in many aspects of state-society and state-economy relations. However, as far as the states management of labour power is considered, the era represented a direct continuity with the post-1980 authoritarian neoliberal restructuring which aimed to put an end to class-based politics (Yalman, 2009). The partys policies aimed to make the labour market more competitive, flexible, low-waged, precarious and de-unionised. Economic policies in this term also intensified indebtedness of labourers as a result of the detrimental developments in the labour markets. The AKP also did not hesitate to use state power whenever possible in order to repress workers discontent and strikes. However, the party also enjoyed a considerable amount of working class support as a result of neoliberal social policy regime which attempted to alleviate the detrimental effects in the labour market. Against this background, this paper attempts to develop a critical appraisal of state-labour relations and make sense the developments in labour market during the AKP era. Although the authoritarian practices of the government reached inconcealable levels during and in the aftermath of Gezi protests in 2013, the paper argues that management of labour power has been authoritarian and de-democratised since the earlier periods of the AKP rule, which is conventionally identified with democratisation and progressive politics by various commentators. In that sense, the paper rejects the good AKP goes bad thesis by arguing that neoliberalism is fundamentally an anti-labour and authoritarian economic and political orientation, and offers a critical political economy approach in making sense of state-labour relations during the AKP rule.

# Colonialism(s), Race, and the Transition to Capitalism in Canada

Jessica Evans (York University, Political Science)

A common critique facing those working within Political Marxism (PM) or the Social Property Relations approach is that it is unable, by virtue of its definition of capitalism and its origins, to account for the contributions and persistence of racialized, gendered, colonial and otherwise unfree labour relations within capitalist modernity. Indeed a recent critique from Alexander Anievas and Kerem Nisancioglu suggests that PM posits a near Platonic conception of capitalism as a theoretical abstraction to which empirical reality must conform. (2015, 30) Certainly, this critique is difficult to defend against, as one of PMs founding thinkers, Ellen Meiksins-Wood argued that (while) gender and racial equality are not in principle incompatible with capitalism . . . . class exploitation is constitutive of capitalism . . . . gender and race are not. In this chapter I argue that PM is not, as per Anievas and Nisancioglu, incapable of accounting for the constitutive role of race, colonialism and unfree labour relations in the transition to capitalism. I suggest that their problem (and perhaps the problem of some PM work to date) is to take the argument made about the original transition to capitalism in England as representative of (in ideal typical fashion) all subsequent transitions. I argue, through an examination of the transition to capitalism in Canada, focusing on the development of competitive agricultural commodity exports, that by situating PM within the globally uneven and combined development of the capitalist mode of production, race and changing colonial relations were, in fact, central to the transition to capitalism in Canada. Specifically, I argue that the formation of racialized subjectivities in Canada were deployed as a substitution strategy of organizing population for the purposes of agricultural development in a situation where the social property relations that generated the transition to capitalism in England, could not be replicated.

# Art is... the Permanent Revolution: Working Artists Against Capital

Marcos Fabris (University of So Paulo, Brazil)

More often than not the study of art and its history will attempt to establish relations that tend to consider either the development of techniques detached from their historical and material contexts, the story and works of geniuses or masters, or the association of the medium with the beaux arts and their correspondent markets. If these approaches seem to empty out any endeavour of political readings, alternatives are needed to restore the political contents to works that have been conceived as such. This presentation intends to discuss how politically engaged artists attempt to address this issue nowadays, raising in their contemporary productions questions such as: what forms of resistance against Capital can be articulated bearing in mind an entire artistic tradition that has been politically neutralized? What artistic forms should be used to represent this long revolution? How to read these forms today under the light of historical materialism? Some interesting answers can be found in Manfred Kirchheimers Art is the permanent revolution, a 2012 documentary where the German-born American director teaches a lesson on how contemporary artists can profit from a tradition in order to see themselves as working artists attempting to give voice to the working classes and fight their fights long begun and by no means extinct, especially in times of worldwide rise of populist rights. The presentation will discuss not only the examples of contemporary struggles given by the film but also the film itself as a collective example of that critical struggle in the heart of a global Trumpland.



# **Marxian dependency theory in Latin America after the pink tide. Lessons learned from popular movements and its struggles**

**Mariano Féliz**

The global capitalist crisis has had a huge impact in the so-called neodevelopmentalist processes of capitalist development in South America. In particular, in Argentina the combination of local barriers and limits (originated in the particular form of dependent development) with regional and global events, have put into question the continuity of this particular way of capitalist strategy for development.

We propose to analyze this process and its current transitional crisis in the light of class conflict and the particular form of dependent capitalism in Argentina. We will stress the way in which the articulation of (a) class relationships and struggles with (b) patriarchal rule (and struggles against it) and (c) super-exploitation of nature (and clashes to stop it), amount to a particular form for working class strategies for radical social change.

We will analyze the particular form of these struggles and the way in which they constitute and -at the same time- put into question, the production and reproduction of capitalist value in Argentina's dependent setting.

## **"Crisis of praxis": Explaining the Fragmentation of the Brazilian Left**

**Sabrina Fernandes (University of Brasilia)**

This paper is based on extensive fieldwork as part of my doctoral studies on fragmentation and depoliticization in Brazil. The concept of a "crisis of praxis" arises from this research to explain the context wherein the Brazilian left finds itself fragmented but, despite acknowledgement of this issue, continues to face schisms and difficulties to unite. The concept of a crisis of praxis is proposed to attend to the misalignment between theory and practice at the leftist organizational level that has led to melancholia and distance from the consciousness of the class, despite the potential held by new mobilizations both spontaneous and organized. By a crisis of praxis I mean not only a state of misalignment in the activities and projects of political parties, social movements, and the broader social groups but also a disconnect in terms of their goals, organizing, planning, and ideological positions that lead to a plethora of similar but at times antagonistic visions about social justice and alternatives to capitalism (particularly in its neoliberal expression) rather than a collective praxis. Two axes permeate this crisis: fragmentation and depoliticization. It is argued that without properly addressing fragmentation and depoliticization, the left will have trouble appealing to the working class, especially given the conclusions of a crisis of representation that was exposed in Brazil in June 2013 and capitalized on by right-wing conservative forces in order to foster political instability in their favour.

# **Explaining the Absence of Anti-austerity Mobilization in Cyprus: Class Struggle and the National Question**

**Leandros Fischer (Cyprus University of Technology (CUT)/University of Cyprus (UCY))**

Among southern European, the Republic of Cyprus (RoC) has remained a conspicuous exception in terms of mobilizations against austerity. The so-called bail-in, which was imposed on savings by the EU in 2013, led to a spontaneous outburst of anger. However, the protests could not be sustained, despite ensuing privatizations and other austerity measures imposed by the current conservative Anastasiades government. The once powerful Left has been unable to offer a coherent response. Last Mays legislative elections were marked by a high abstention rate among the core electorate of the left-wing Progressive Party of the Working People (AKEL). This trend is widely attributed to disappointment with the Lefts record in office between 2008 and 2013. In a parallel development, talks underway since last year aimed at resolving the islands decades-long division between a Greek South and Turkish North, have effectively shifted the focus of public debate from austerity to the national question. Among much of the Greek-Cypriot Left, a reunification of the island is framed as the only way out of the current impasse. A federal Cyprus is viewed as the necessary precondition for tilting the balance of power in favour of labour. This assumption is not only shared by AKEL, but also by much of the extra-parliamentary Left in the South. This presentation argues: 1) That the low level of mobilization is not primarily the result of the Lefts experience in government, but is directly related to the fixation with the national question prevalent within much of the Greek Cypriot Left. AKELs attitude towards the negotiation process was characterized by critical support for the Anastasiades government and the prioritization of national unity. This effectively translated into a lukewarm discourse vis--vis austerity. 2) It was the prioritization of the national question in the first place, which explains the weak response of the previous left-reformist government, when faced with attacks by the establishment. 3) This phenomenon transcends the reformist/radical-divide. Even demonstrations in favour of reunification organized by radical segments of the Left, were limited to demands for an agreement between the leaders of both communities, stopping short of presenting an alternative socioeconomic vision. 4) The prioritization of the Cyprus problem among the Left is based on an erroneous perspective on the national question, which is closer to a Wilsonian interpretation of national self-determination as well as an essentialist focus on Cypriot identity, rather than a Marxist analysis and an emphasis on national oppression. Accordingly, the dilemma of solution/non-solution is presented as the ultimate existentialist question for the Left on the island. 5) The way of the Greek Cypriot Left out of its current predicament is contingent upon the abandonment of the national question as its main frame of reference. Indeed, given the dangerous instability prevalent in the region, the preservation of the existing peace and a focus on class struggle amounts to a far more important and noble task.

## **Work, Resistance and Development: Two case studies from Argentina**

**Adam Fishwick (De Montfort University)**

Through two case studies based on research on the trajectory of import-substitution industrialisation in Argentina during the twentieth century, I develop a critical rethinking of the role of work, the workplace, and resistance for the political economy of development. In the paper, I examine the relationship between the changing organisation of production and the workplace conflict this engendered. Using industry journals and workers newspapers

from Argentina, I show how the reorganisation of work in two leading sectors metalworking and automobiles targeted the amelioration and fragmentation of resistance throughout the 1950s and 1960s. In doing so, I illustrate the significance of work for understanding how resistance was instrumental in determining the strategies adopted by firms and, in turn, how this re-shaped the trajectory of industrial development. To foreground this significance of the workplace, I combine insights from the operaista tradition, including the early work of Antonio Negri, with critical labour process and labour relations theory to show how the inversion of Autonomist Marxism can help to re-think the political economy of development. I argue that work and the workplace is the missing link in theorising the political economy of development that can enable a foregrounding of resistance.

## **From Nixon to Trump: Metastases of Cultural Power**

**Carl Freedman (Louisiana State University (Baton Rouge))**

In response to the frequent comparisons of Trumps political appeal to Nixons, I propose to revisit the theses of my book *The Age of Nixon: A Study in Cultural Power* (Zero Books, 2012) in order to consider their application to Nixons perhaps most Nixonian successor. My argument will be that the white petty-bourgeois resentment at the core of Nixonian cultural power is indeed fully operative in Trumpian political culture (expressed most notably in the giant Nuremburg-style rallies that were at the center of Trumps presidential campaign and that he has, unprecedentedly, continued even after acceding to the White House). But I will also argue that Nixons organization of such resentment through an anal-erotic projection of orderliness, parsimony, and obstinacy has been radically disrupted and reconfigured in the appeal of his successor. Drawing on ieks work (and thus also on Lacans, and ultimately on the Freud of Totem and Taboo), I will distinguish between the Law in its more-or-less official capacity, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the obscene underside or supplement of the Law; and I will stress that, as iek has often pointed out, a society or social movement may be bound together as much by its transgressions of official regulations as by its formal obedience to them. Nixonthe most doggedly dressed man imaginable, in Garry Willss pertinent phrasestrove to embody the Law in its respectable daylight (and anal-erotic) form, leaving the dark obscene supplement to be merely implied (or, in the 1968 campaign, to be represented by his rival-cum-partner George Wallace). With Trump, by contrast, the obscene supplement is overt and avowed and, indeed, not even any longer precisely a supplement in the colloquial sense. Trumpian cultural power is openly transgressive, instanced in those outburststhe mockery of war heroes, the boasting of sexual assaultsthat have so horrified respectable opinion. Whereas Nixonian cultural power was appropriate to a Fordist and Keynesian capitalism about to reach its ultimate limits, its Trumpian variant and successor corresponds to a neo-liberal austerian capitalism in political crisis. In concluding my comparison of Nixon and Trump, I will probably not be able to resist using the admittedly much overused formulation: the first time as tragedy, the second time as farce.

## **Testicular Work: Constructions of Men's Labour in Reproduction**

**Frank G. Karioris**

The testicles are remarkably important to the construction of male identity and are becoming increasing brought into the sphere of labor and reproduction. This paper will seek to explore the dual meaning of the word reproduction. The role of reproduction and

production, in the Marxist sense, will be brought into conversation with reproduction in the biological sense, with specific emphasis on the way that the testicles are brought into these conversations. A number of authors have discussed the dual mode of reproduction, but they have not thoroughly reflected on the testicles and how this impacts on masculinity and its connection with labor. This takes on even greater importance in a period of increasing numbers of eliminated workers from the labor market (Blacker 2013, 101), discussions and technology that sees mens role in sexual reproduction as often irresponsible or as misproducers, but recent studies show that men in the West have seen a 40% decrease in their sperm counts. These varied elements come together through looking at the testicles through the lens of reproduction and production. This paper, then, seeks to bring these together to gain a better understanding of the ways that this is impacting on men and their connection to production and reproduction in the 21st Century.

## **Escaping Reductionism: Renewing Historical Materialism and Multi-systems Theory**

**Jeremiah Gaster (York University)**

Both Dual Systems Theory (DST) and Unitary Systems Theory (UST) have up to now failed to properly address different systems of power, their construction, and their capacity to either co-exist with each other or not, at times aligned and at other times disassociated. This paper will argue that if it is applied correctly Multi Systems Theory (MST) offers a better way to understand, theoretically, historically, and strategically different relations of force, than either other variants of DST or whatever form of UST that is undertaken. Through a comprehensive contextualization of MST this paper will compare various systems of power as a means of interrogating the limits and boundaries they place on the totality of the social world. In order to interrogate MST, this paper will use specific aspects of Marxist and feminist theories together with an examination of the differences between UST and DST. In order to elaborate on the process of the materialist analysis this paper introduces Ellen Meiksins Woods approach to the renewal of the theory of historical materialism. By drawing on Woods take on materialism, the social totality can be viewed as a phenomenon that exceeds a single system of power. This paper then is interested in reformulating the social realm as a phenomenon held together by a multiplicity of force relations, creating systems of power that envelop and at the same time rupture the social totality, and which germinate their own internal dynamics and logics that need to be examined both separately and as merging into a more/less cohesive whole. The focus of this paper is not on simply mapping one relation onto another or reducing the social totality into the emergence of capitalist social relations, but rather in the harder work of disentangling different historical relationships. Woods renewal of historical materialism shifts the focus of materialist theory and thus gives a more defined theoretical foundation for understanding DST. It is essential to differentiate between varying forms of DST, including the proper form, and to highlight some of the underlying arguments that distinguish between DST and UST approaches. To fully grasp the different systems and their interactions it is necessary to examine specific examples of systems of power, in this case, the systems of class and sex/gender. It is necessary to posit the following central question: why not use DST in order to examine the world and the power relationships within it? While UST and DST in some form or another tend to be reductionist, MST alone and if applied properly allows one to understand the specificity of different forms of power, their individual composition, and their interactions, as they shape the world that we live in, both separately as discrete dynamics, and also as discrete dynamics that form the social totality together. This examination works under the assumption that there are many dynamics of power and that some of these dynamics of power form systems of power throughout the totality. Although

these systems of power have different foundations that can interact and intersect with each other, the multiplicity of these foundations does not prevent them from ultimately ensuring that the terminal point of each dynamic in each of these systems is different. The process of tracing the manner in which a MST is applied properly offers a way of understanding each system qua system as a fuller dynamic featuring a beginning and an end, as well as a system of interactions amongst other systems is what this paper will examine.

## **Slaves to the Algorithm? Class (de/re)composition in Computationally-dependent Workplaces**

**Craig Gent (University of Warwick)**

Like computerisation and digitisation before it, algorithmic management is becoming a new conceptual carpet under which to sweep a multitude of emerging practices, interventions and realities faced by workers today. Although similarities to Foucauldian interpretations of the Panopticon have made useful contributions to the discussion elsewhere, I want dig into the historical and material lineage and context of algorithmic management in order to better understand what these various processes mean and dont mean, with a view to locating workers agency in struggle on the technological battlefield. By focusing on screen-based technologies within distribution work (ranging from Amazon to Deliveroo), I want to understand not only how managerial media act to decompose working class collectivity, but I also want to offer suggestions about how certain aspects of algorithmic management are providing new opportunities for working class refusal and autonomy, as well as actually posing a fundamental threat to managerial control over the work process.

## **Marxist Analysis of History Against Marxist Philosophy of History**

**Heide Gerstenberger**

As far as the use of direct violence as a means for the exploitation of labor is concerned, Marxists as well as proponents of capitalism have assumed that it would, in the course of capitalist development, be overcome by the rationality inherent in the conditions for capitalist practices of appropriation. I propose to explain that this assumption has not been confirmed by the historical functioning of capitalism. If struggles of organized workers and widespread public protests have achieved regulations which banned violent practices of exploitation to the social as well as geographic fringes of capitalism, processes of globalization have, once again, moved those practices into the center of the capitalist world. And there is no dynamics inherent in economic rationality which promises their abolishment. The repercussions of this hypothesis to the Marxist philosophy of history are far-reaching. It undermines any conviction that so-called natural laws of history will lead to the end of capitalism.

## **The Future of Capital and its Alternatives in 21st Century: The Essentiality of Economic Democratization**

**Barry Gills (University of Helsinki), A Hamed Hosseini, (University of Newcastle, Australia)**

In 21st century, capital deserves a more comprehensive and workable definition than just a process where money makes more money through production relations. It is important to acknowledge that Capital is a societal process, through which surplus value is produced and controlled by 'unsustainable' and 'un-sovereign' ways of exploiting not only labor (both manual and intellectual), land (and other commons), nature (non-renewable sources of energy and the earth's bio-capacity including the climate), but also exploiting societal/communal solidarities (from the level of household to the world community level). Thus, a comprehensive analysis of capital and capitalist relations requires not only the theorization of the exploitation of labor, land and nature, but also the systemic de-democratization of the processes of communal production and reproduction. Financial speculations, enclosures and hoardings that are routinely determined undemocratically through the chaotic interplay between the uncertainty of market mechanisms and the plutocratic influences of financial monopolies, corporate powerhouses and corporate welfare-state play a significant role. The withdrawal of capital from productive circulation is part of (and has become increasingly a significant component of) today's capitalism. Capital strikes', including austerity measures, are not only about creating and controlling surplus (no matter how spurious this is) but also preventing democratic determination and self-sufficient uses of resources. Accordingly, this Century will be the era of intensifying conflicts and convergences between alternative forms of capital and alternatives to capital, ranging from (right/left wing) populist movements, to new reformist orientations toward the democratic social regulations of 'capital', to antipodal alternatives to the existence of capital.

## **Translating the Russian Revolution: A Narrative of Vernacular Marxism from Late Colonial Kerala**

**Ardra Neelakandan Girija (Graduate Student at the Centre for Political Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi)**

The lasting presence of the Left in south Asia and particularly in Kerala, even after the disintegration of the Soviet and European Left has a lot to do with their deep entrenchment in the popular sensibility of these regions public sphere. During the 1920s itself, a new vocabulary of revolution, labour, capital and class was introduced in the vernacular public sphere, using the spread of the print technology and literacy initiatives in Kerala, in contrast to other regions in India. The early literary and cultural initiatives of the socialists and communists borrowed substantially from the Soviet discourse on art and aesthetics. This paper foregrounds this aspect of the region's literary-intellectual history in relation to the conceptual and actual translation of Marxism into the vernacular, stimulated by the Russian Revolution and the 'Thought Revolution' it inaugurated in the feudal-colonial society. It intends to map the influence the Revolution had, not only on the hegemonic growth of the communist movement in the region, but also on the other transformatory process including the anti-colonial national movement and the anti-caste community reform movements. Kerala gained significance in the political map of the world for the democratic electoral victory secured in the state by the communist party in 1957. This was primarily a result of the vigorous mobilisational strategies and processes of politicization that the party activists

undertook among the masses from the early years. The majority of the party supporters belonged to the lower castes that formed the vast agricultural laboring classes. The significance of the intellectual and aesthetic hegemony the communist movement established in the region cannot be ignored if one is to formulate ways of understanding and researching the political history and contemporary of the region and the history of the communist movement in post-colonial societies in general. Moreover, the extensive translation of the theoretical as well as literary texts from the Soviet Union enriched the language of Kerala called Malayalam and enabled the local intellectual public sphere to grow unlike most of the other regions of the country. The human development indices of the region including the social security measures like minimum wages and labour rights of the region are comparable to those of the developed nations, as many scholars have argued. In this paper, I shall try to trace the mechanisms of creative adaptation and 'translation' of Marxism in the region, in the late colonial years, as influenced by the event of the Revolution of 1917 and the Soviet experiences that unfolded in the years that followed. This will throw some critical light on the diversity of Marxist theoretical and political practices with an example from colonial South Asia.

## **Commodification of Nature within the Chilean Food System.**

**Pedro Glatz (Lund University Master in Human Ecology)**

The paper will examine the creation and development of the modern Chilean Food System. Through a Marxist analysis of the commodification of nature the research shows how the food system plays a fundamental role in the success story of the modern Chile, while causing environmental burden and social conflicts. The pivotal decade of 1970 will be described as the moment where the process of neoliberalization experienced by the Chilean society after the Military Coup of 1973 started. A process of accumulation by dispossession was performed across the countryside as a strategy against the agrarian reform process enacted by the previous socialist government. This movement created the foundations for the development of the soil and labour market in the formerly pseudo-feudal Chilean countryside. At the same time, a similar process took place in the southern regions of the country, where a salmon aquaculture industry was created with heavy support of the state. An assignation of exploitation rights to install aquaculture cages across the shores was done by the Chilean state. These two economic sectors had become two of the backbones of the export-oriented Chilean economy, while provoking an increasing environmental depletion and rising social conflicts. The presentation will provide a Marxist interpretation of the creation and development of the Chilean Food System, proposing the crucial role that the commodification of nature played in its creation in the 1970s. The export-oriented orientation of the economy and the increased connection with international flows of capital among the global food system will be addressed as major factor in the inability of alternative proposals of a more sustainable food system.

## **The Ends of Soviet Communism: Emancipatory Politics in the East of Europe**

**Saygun Gkarksel (Bogazici University, Sociology Department)**

If the Russian Revolution is historically and politically important to understand the modern world, are the ends of Soviet communism also important? What do those ends say about the historical defeats and tragedies of revolutionary politics, as well as the impasse of the

so-called postrevolutionary age of human rights, rule of law, and neoliberal capitalism that followed the dissolution of Soviet-type states? Departing from the autopsy mode of analysis of Soviet communism as a ruinous, dead past, or from the demobilizing, nostalgic or melancholic reflections on the end of communism and revolution, my paper argues that (1) the history of Soviet communism was not simply the history of the state, which had communism as its ideology, but one, which also developed a critique of itself, articulated through different forms of theoretical engagement and social/class struggle; (2) these critical engagements need not be seen limited to the specifics of the Soviet epoch, but they also throw important light on the conditions (ends of communism) that have given way to neoliberal de-democratization and right-wing populism, particularly in Eastern Europe. Based on my doctoral research in Poland, I will develop this argument by tracing the political life of the Open Letter to the Party, one of the key documents of revolutionary Marxism that emerged from the East bloc. Co-authored by the popular dissident activists Jacek Kuro and Karol Modzelewski in 1964, the Letter drew on the historical experience of the Russian Revolution, interwar fascism in Europe, anti-colonial revolutions, as well as the pact of stability brokered by the two great, nationalized, militarist power-blocs: the so-called socialist world and capitalist world. The Letter became widely known beyond Poland, and both Kuron and Modzelewski later became prominent activists in the massive Solidarity worker movement of the 1980s and public figures in postsocialist Poland. By focusing on the struggles by which the Letter was invoked, silenced, or discarded, my paper will discuss the shifting social-material and political conditions of revolutionary action and thinking. In doing so, I will also discuss the emergent leftwing groups in Poland that build on this Letter to engage the current political impasse and refashion an alternative future to neoliberal and national-conservative capitalism.

## **Lost Dreams and Unpaid Rent: An Inquiry Into Supermarket Work**

### **Bill Golding**

In this paper I will expand and update a workers inquiry I wrote published by Plan C. I will investigate the relationship between technology and the methods of measuring productivity in the logistics sector of supermarkets, outline the effects this has on the actual labour process from the point of view of the worker, and identify avenues of resistance with comments on their effectiveness. I will focus on the ways in which a newly updated computer system used in the delivery department for a major UK supermarket has led to much tighter controls over the workers while reducing the control of the department managers; how new techniques of surveillance have been introduced and, simultaneously, large parts of the workers labour has been made anonymous; and how all of these changes has influenced in a near collapse of morale for the work force. Alongside this I will discuss techniques of resistance already employed by the workers, their success and failures, and what potential avenues are still open to the workers to improve their situation in the face of monotonous, anti-social, and low paid work.



# **Repetition of Primitive Accumulation and Legal Violence: New Approaches to the Critical Sociology of Law**

**Guilherme Leite Goncalves (Rio de Janeiro State University (UERJ))**

The present article aims to indicate a possibility of expanding the conditions of understanding of the socio-legal reproduction of capitalism in the critical sociology of law. First I demonstrate that the antiproductivist turn (following the Habermasian form) resigns this epistemological project; it leads the critical sociology of law to the liberalism-idealism and thereby produces an analytical deficit in understanding the legal organization of the fundamental structures of accumulation. Next, I suggest that the critique of law (following a Pachukanian form) offers a solution to this impasse by recognizing that the ought to be is already achieved in the structures of inequality. I argue however that such criticism can not exhaust the possibilities of understanding the socio-legal reproduction of capitalism since it merely embraces the position of law only at the moment of the exchange of commodities. Nevertheless, beyond this momentum the capitalist development, pressured by situations of overaccumulation, has an expansionary phase oriented to the taking of non-commodified spaces, where the surplus can flow opening a new cycle of valorization. This phase will be analyzed through the notion of permanent repetition of primitive accumulation and the theory of Landnahme. My hypothesis is that, under these conditions, the law appears as explicit legal violence and prescription of inequality. Considering these structures, I state that law operates on the basis of: legal discourses of othering (human rights), privatization regimes (public-private partnerships) and criminal law (criminalization of protest and poverty). Finally I argue that the concept of primitive accumulation and the theory of Landnahme have the potential to make critical sociology of law to advance in the understanding of the socio-legal reproduction of capitalism.

# **The Future of Capital and its Alternatives in 21<sup>st</sup> Century: The Essentiality of Economic Democratization**

**James Goodman (University of Technology Sydney)**

The 2008 Global Financial Crisis fundamentally undermined global legitimacy for neoliberalism. The political Centre has been displaced by new political formations from the Left, and latterly, from the Right. The long interregnum beyond neoliberalism, to a new model of regulation and accumulation, has opened-up a field of political possibilities. There are deep divisions over models for capital accumulation, whether state-directed or financialised, and intensifying conflicts over global flows of resources and people, overlaid by a new unilateralism in geo-politics and geo-economics. In the ideological flux, political experiments from the Left have created new horizons and some political leverage, only to be overwhelmed in the present-day counter-revolt and revival of ethno-populism. A century ago Antonio Gramsci addressed the ideological power of Right populism in the crisis of UK-centred imperialist accumulation, in another interregnum. In that crisis both the Left alternatives against capital and the Fascist model of authoritarian accumulation were mobilised against imperial Laissez-Faire. What parallels and insights are there for the Left today? What role is played by emerging forms of capital, against the neo-mercantilism? How to assess post-GFC experiments from the Left - what alternatives against capital are emerging?

## **"How Can One Make a Revolution Without Firing Squads?": Understanding the Bolsheviks' "Red Terror," 1918-1921**

**Jeff Goodwin (New York University)**

The Bolsheviks employed what they called Red Terror against their enemies during the civil war (1918-1921) that followed their seizure of power in October 1917. I address the following questions in this paper: What did the Bolsheviks mean by revolutionary terror? What specific tactics did the Red Terror include? Why did the Bolsheviks decide to employ these tactics? Were these tactics, which included the summary execution of prisoners and the taking of hostages, effective or counterproductive? Finally, was the Red Terror justified? I argue that the Bolsheviks had plausible and humane reasons for employing terror tactics when they did. But I also argue that, in retrospect, these tactics were neither effective nor, for this reason alone, justified.

## **The Politics of the Concept of Totality**

**Kanishka Goonewardena (University of Toronto)**

Although Georg Lukcs famously wrote that the standpoint of totality is the essence of Marxism as a revolutionary method, no concept of Marxism has been more virulently discredited by poststructuralist as much as Cold War liberal perspectives than totality. As Fredric Jameson has often noted, moreover, totality has been effectively equated with totalitarianism in popular political discourse, presenting Marxist theory with considerable challenges in the battleground of ideology. Against this backdrop, I first explore some of the most influential concepts of totality within the Western Marxist tradition, noting the salient differences and possible rapprochements between the approaches of such philosophers as Lukcs, Sartre, Lefebvre, Adorno and Althusser. Next, I examine some radical critiques of the concept of totality directed against Marxism especially by feminism and postcolonialism, while also noting how some strands of socialist-feminism and anti-colonial traditions have productively and even collaboratively appropriated the concept of totality in emancipatory fashion. Finally, I turn to the relevance of the concept of totality to make sense of some contemporary political challenges of planetary scope, notably the problems posed by global urbanization and climate change. In sum, the paper shows how old objections concerning totality persist into current political debates, while arguing for a radical re-engagement with the problem of totality with old and new methods.

## **Wages for Housework and the Future of Social Reproduction**

**Alva Gotby (University of West London)**

This paper will trace the politics of Wages for Housework (WFH), an international feminist activist group whose writings have had a significant impact on Marxist feminism. Members of the group theorised gender relations within the family as a fundamental aspect of the capitalist economy. The family, they argued, functions as a site of the reproduction of the working class and of social reproduction more broadly. It is through gendered forms of labour performed within the family that the special commodity of labour power is produced and reproduced. Reproductive labour thus occupies a strategic point of resistance to

capitalism. However, reproductive labour is also what keeps the proletariat alive. This double character raises questions of the possibilities and problems of reproductive labour as a site of feminist, anti-capitalist struggle. I will explore the radical potential of WFH writings, particularly the demand for wages for housework. This demand was intended to denaturalise gender and present the possibility of refusing reproductive labour. I am interested in its double potential as a form of feminist resistance to gender as well as a demand for increased economic power, recognition and potential for resistance. Reproductive labour is an ambivalent site of resistance and struggle, where a straightforward refusal of labour leads to the death of those we love. A second question is thus what radical potential there can be in attempts to organise reproductive labour differently, outside the constraints of the heterosexual nuclear family. Here, theories of the commons as a new form of social reproduction complement the struggle against reproductive labour in its current form. The commons represent the potential of refusing the privatised form of care that have become the norm of life under capitalism, and thus of undoing forms of heterosexism that pertain to the family form. The writings of WFH thus open the possibility not only of diagnosing the oppressive structures of the privatised, capitalist family, but also several strategies of resisting these structures and imagining a different future.

## **Political Practice and the Creation of History: Questions of Determinism and Contingency in the Work of Lukacs and Althusser**

**Konstantinos Gousis (PhD, Roehampton University, London)**

Despite all their important differences, Lukacs and Althusser defended historical openness to different possibilities against vulgar materialism and historical process as a pre-conceived destiny. Lukacs during the 60s based on his ontology of social being, as a project under construction, has argued for the motto there is always a concrete alternative, a choice between certain possibilities. His rejection of the dominant soviet diamat dogma and economism resulted in elaborating socialist democracy as a strategic concept for revolutionary politics. According to Lukacs Lenin represents a unique example of a possible synthesis between materialist philosophy and political praxis: beyond the significance of his actions and his writings, the figure of Lenin as the very embodiment of permanent readiness represents an ineradicable value a new form of exemplary attitude to reality. Althusser has also turned to Lenin in order to rethink Marxist philosophy. In his famous lecture Lenin and philosophy (1968) Althusser defends a new practice of philosophy with class politics at its heart against philosophizing for no other purpose than to ruminate in philosophy. In his later work Althusser develops materialism of the encounter or aleatory materialism and emphasizes the contingency of the social order in order to contribute to a nalifew practice of politics. This presentation will read Lukacs and Althussers attempts to rethink materialism in parallel and try to understand how their point of view help us re-evaluate revolutionary moments and defeats during the 20th century and reload the project of social transformation in the 21st century.

## Shaikhs Concept of Real Competition in Capitalism

Peter Green

The concept of real competition (or competition as war) is central to Shaikhs analysis of the dynamics of Capitalism and arguably his most significant contribution to contemporary debate. Real competition is presented in the book as a superior alternative to both the neoclassical model of perfect competition and diverse heterodox models of imperfect competition, including theories of monopoly capital. It can also be read as a critique of all those (such as David Harvey) who claim that Marx assumes some version of perfect competition in Volume 1 of Capital. But Shaikh fails to adequately address the issue of the historical transformations of the system in the 150 years since Volume 1 was published.

## The Future is in the Living Present

Peter Green

Marx, in 'The Method of Political Economy' in the Grundrisse, says that it "seems to be correct" to use "the population" "to begin with... in economics". Sociologists and philosophers, like psychologists, start with the individual. Indeed, they appear not to know anything else to begin with. I will argue, (as Marx said about beginning with "the population" in economics), that "on closer examination", beginning with the individual, "... proves false". Starting from the idea of (the abstraction that is) the individual, I want to show how we can "move analytically towards ever more simple concepts ..., from the imagined concrete towards" less popular (but Marxist) ideas - ideas about property and class, for example. Only then, it is possible to move the other way, from those abstractions to the concrete - to what Marx called the "ensemble of the social relations".

The modern and postmodern fetishism of the individual assumes that the autonomous owner of private property is the source of value. I propose that Marx's labour theory of value can be concretised as, and that it is consistent with, the universal value of time spent in living human interaction - with the time we spend in what Marx called the "free association of producers". The source of value lies in, I propose, universal, sensuous, material and concrete, (because living) human interactions.

Time spent in such association is what makes all living interactions productive. Free association (today regarded as the future) is immanent within (and it shows us that it is possible to transcend) class and property relations (today called the present).

The living present, and living interaction, undeveloped in Marxism, will be examined in diverse writers, such as Bakhtin ("a particular individual person is a product of the living interaction of social forces"), Husserl (for whom the 'living present' is 'thick'), Deleuze and Derrida.

## The Architecture of Capital Book Three

Jorge Grespan (University of So Paulo)

The project of critique of capitalism and of Political Economy, as Marx envisaged it in 1857, is only complete in Capital Book Three, which describes how competition among capitalists executes an intricate process of equalization and of permanent deviations from

prices of production. Despite the fact that Marx did not write the final version of Book Three, the subject matters there exposed were roughly present since the first plans of the work and constitute the accomplishment of the critique, making impossible the task of understanding Book One by itself. More than that, the incompleteness of Book Three does not imply the absence of articulation of its various themes. On the contrary, the sequence of its chapters or Sections follows a very precise order given by the principle of distribution of surplus value based on the split between labour and private property of the means of production. This split forms not only the general ground of the entire work but also of what can be called the architecture of Book Three. Having already examined how surplus value is produced and circulates, Marx now focuses the process of its distribution among capitalists, a process increasingly commanded by the position of the individual capitalist as proprietor of capital. From the distribution of surplus-value among industrial capitalists examined in the three first Sections of the Book up to the necessity of paying interests to Bankers and rent to landowners described in the fifth and sixth Sections respectively, propriety of capital is affirmed as an independent guiding principle of social life. It is not by chance, therefore, that Book Three is concluded by the analysis of the most fetishized forms of capital comprehended in the Trinity formula.

## **The Work of Werk: Queer Identity, the Family and Social Reproduction**

**Kate Doyle Griffiths (CUNY Graduate Center Red Bloom)**

The Work of Werk: Queer Identity, The Family and Social Reproduction Kate Doyle Griffiths Critics ranging from Zizek to Adolph Reed have noted the proliferation of queer identities, particularly gender identities, under capitalism, characterizing it as a feature, and at time a symptom, of neoliberalism or postmodernity. Meanwhile, Lisa Duggan argues that such critiques reinforce a dominant liberal ideology that obscures the way in which relations of identity--gender, sexuality, race, and ability--structure social life (and thus the life of the working class itself). Drawing on that insight, and by engaging with recent the marxist-feminist revitalization of a unitary account of production and social reproduction, this submission will suggest an alternative interpretation of these changes in queer identity as not merely ideologically constitutive but materially constitutive to recent transformations in the capitalist family and the workplace. Rather than refocusing attention on the material relations of class, however, this dismissal of identitarian assertions in fact forestalls a marxist analysis of queerness and heteronormativity as a crucial relationship within the totality of the existing working class, a key site of the intersections of culture and the economy because it exists at the intersection of the family and the labor market. This paper will frame ethnographic life histories of three queer workers from New York City and KwaZulu-Natal South Africa in the context of the historical developments of queer identity under capitalism and an analysis of the relationships between 21st century family structures and labor markets.. Using a close reading of the interrelationships between individuals changing identifications over time, their paid employment and unpaid work, and their changing family relationships, I will argue that queer identity, rather than a byproduct of niche-marketing or narcissism, is functional to the relationship between state austerity, extended family networks and the labor market. As states have slashed and streamlined social services, the costs of social reproduction are increasingly borne by extended family networks. These histories will highlight the role of queer workers in rendering family networks more flexible; and able to incorporate precarious, temporary, and part time work as part of a collective strategy of survival. In these arrangements, queers serve as a category of last hired, first fired with respect to the family, creating an optional category of reserve labor for a working class increasingly pressed in our efforts to self-reproduce. Finally, the

piece will develop an alternate, resistant role for queer workers in the potential for the development of class consciousness and class-based organizing, distinct from previous accounts of queer identity which tends toward a focus on the situational and symbolic register of queering various aspects of social life and culture.

## **History as Social Criticism: A Study on the Marxist Tradition in Philippine Historical Scholarship through the Selected Works of Renato Constantino**

**Francisco Jayme Paolo Ario Guiang (Department of History, College of Social Sciences and Philosophy, University of the Philippines)**

The legacy of Marxist ideas amongst academic circles in the Philippines could be considered as one of the most vital by-products of the long history of communist groups in the country from the establishment of the Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas (PKP-1930, translated as Communist Party of the Philippines 1930) on November 7, 1930 up to the foundation of its splinter group on December 26, 1986, the Communist Party of the Philippines Marxist-Leninist (CPP ML). The political impact of the Marxist tradition from the 1930s up to the present had influenced some of the countrys important intellectuals. One of which is Renato Constantino, a well-known Filipino historian and public intellectual, considered as one of the pioneers in the Marxist interpretation of Philippine history. Constantinos works, especially his two-volume history book entitled *The Philippines: A Past Revisited* (1975) and *The Philippines: A Continuing Past* (1979), are collectively identified by local academics as the essentials of the leftist tradition in Philippine historical scholarship. Though Constantinos ideas are widely cited and used to enrich historiographical knowledge and education, there remains a need to asses and comprehend the development of his historical and socio-political thought in order to elucidate more about the nature of Marxist history writing in the Philippines. Hence, this study argues that by tracing the development of Constantinos Marxist thought through a close examination of selected works on Philippine history and society from 1940 to 1992, one can prove that the historian considers historical discipline not only as a way of studying the past but also as a tool for social criticism. Although Constantino does not directly mention or define the concept of history as social criticism, analyzing his works in terms of social criticism could elicit a deeper comprehension about the historians Marxist views on Philippine society and history.

## **Theorising the Power of Rail Workers in Britain Since Privatisation**

**Tom Haines-Doran**

Recent strikes by train Guards, led by the RMT union, represent one of the most intense and prolonged trade union disputes in neoliberal-era Britain, frequently bringing the railways to a standstill in economically important areas of the country. Such worker militancy stands in stark contrast to the low levels of strike activity of other groups of workers. This paper asks why these rail workers seem to wield considerable power against their employers, despite the aim of privatisation being to weaken unions through increased labour market competition. Critical industrial relations economist Howard Botwinicks *Persistent Inequalities* provides a useful template for understanding this problem. For

Botwinick, the potential for workers power is constrained by their ability to impose costs of obstruction on their employers, which in turn is limited by their employers relative competitiveness within their sector. This paper shows that, as if accepting Botwinicks logic, the RMT have successfully managed to remove wage determination from competition in large sections of the rail industry. However, this would not have been possible without a grassroots-led democratisation of the union since privatisation. Finally, the paper argues that utilising Botwinicks framework to analyse concrete workers struggles necessitates extending it to account for additional factors such as the level of state intervention within a given industry.

## **The New Economic Policy: Revolution, Backwardness and Transition**

**Alberto Handfas (Federal University of Sao Paulo - Brazil)**

The New Economic Policy (NEP) was meant to reintroduce private market mechanisms in light sectors of the economy to facilitate the transition from an extremely damaged country toward socialism through the development of a modern State Capitalism under Soviet state control. Such control would require maximum emphasis in planning and focus on state-driven heavy industry investments. The main leadership of the Bolshevik party after Lenins death neglected such requirement, leading to major proportionality crises during the 1920s. This problem will be assessed in this paper using the available dataset. Such setbacks not only delayed the construction of a pathway toward socialism but also threatened the very existence of the Soviet Republic by the end of that decade, leading to the traumatic abandonment of the NEP and the violent collectivization process.

## **The Two Souls of Labour - Integrative and Transformative**

**Simon Hannah (Labour Party, Momentum)**

The struggle between left and right in the Labour Party can be understood as a fight for supremacy between an integrationist and a transformative wing. These terms are not necessarily new, Leo Panitch has used them in the past[1] and Alan Warde developed an analysis of the Labour Party's strategic differences that used this analysis.[2] But I want to develop it further as it explains the root of the ideological differences in the Labour Party. The integrative wing is the right of the party. Integrationists seek to win positions for Labour in the already existing state structures and implement gradual change from within the already existing power relations in British society. It is pragmatic, concessionary and integrationism has always been the dominant force of the party, relatively hegemonic in the PLP and completely intertwined in the link with the trade unions. Labour was established in 1900 as a party to ensure the representation of trade unionists into the British state as a way of securing pro working class legislation. This inherently integrationist attitude is a reflection of the nature of trade unions themselves, not to overthrow capitalism but to ensure better working class representation within its structures. The transformative wing is the left of the party. It is characterised by a desire to alter the structural and power relations in society, to transform social relations between classes. In the words of Benn and the 1974 election manifesto, to bring about a fundamental and irreversible shift in the balance of power and wealth in favour of working people and their families. Transformation does not simply mean radical change, it contains within it an explicit criticism of the unequal power in capitalism and world politics and seeks to remedy them through parliamentary, or

occasionally extra-parliamentary, means. The implications for this analysis on Corbyn and his supporters is that a transformative agenda must involve fundamental change to the party. To act as a transformative party in a period in which neoliberalism has altered the received ideas of the electorate and where the mass working class organisations (upon which previous socialist transformative strategies rested) have been demobilised requires different long term strategies. It must combine parliamentary and extra parliamentary methods to subvert the domination of rigid electoralist orthodoxies. To make this happen it must alter the constitution of the party to assert the primacy of political struggle outside and against established power relations. Finally, a transformative agenda must grapple with the contradictions and obstacles posed by state structures a debate posed by the Socialist League most acutely in the 1930s and only partially revived by the Bennite movement in the 1980s [1] Panitch (1971) Ideology and Integration: The case of the British Labour Party, Political Studies Volume 19, Issue 2, June 1971 [2] Warde A (1982) Consensus and Beyond, Manchester University Press

## **Revolutionary Ireland: From Insurrection to Reaction**

**Shaun Harkin (Author, James Connolly Reader)**

James Connolly warned the partition of Ireland would lead to a 'carnival of reaction' with Green Tory rule in the South and Orange Tory rule in the North. His prediction proved correct. Partition at the beginning of the 1920s led to a reactionary pro-capitalist Southern state deeply influenced by the Catholic Church. The new state in the North viewed the minority Catholic population as an 'enemy within' and was structured to maintain Unionist rule. The British Empire was expelled from 26 of Ireland's 32 counties but the great hopes carried by revolutionaries in the years of rebellion were dashed. Partitioned Ireland had nothing in common with the Workers' Republic envisioned by Connolly, Jim Larkin, Winifred Carney and leaders of the revolutionary struggle. Today, there are two failed states on the island of Ireland. The political institutions in Northern Ireland go from crisis to crisis but cannot escape the sectarian structures rooted in the foundation of the state. Brexit has posed the question of Ireland's future and its border more sharply than in decades. The peace that followed three decades of war is deeply held but the threat of sectarian violence lingers. The neoliberal project is mediated in the Northern state in a very specific way and moves forward through every generated politic crisis. An alternative exists. Class politics is the only viable avenue from deadlock and impasse. It is time now to renew Connolly's vision of a Socialist Ireland.

## **Book Launch: "Aesthetic Marx" the Politics of Aesthetics in Capital – Gandesha and Hartle**

**Johan Frederik Hartle (University of Arts and Design, Karlsruhe), Daniel Hartley (Leeds University), Sami Khatib (Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna)**

The panel will present the book "Aesthetic Marx" (Bloomsbury, 2017) in light of the aesthetic debates on Capital. Three aspects of the aesthetic appear as central: 1) Capital has famously been discussed in light of its many references to word literature, which also secretly present the poeology of Marx's own project. In his paper on the politics of style in Capital, Daniel Hartley will reconstruct these discussions and sketch the style of Capital in light of Marx's aesthetico-political agenda which had first been developed in the Early Writings (on Prussian censorship, on the Jewish Question) and sharpened throughout his



political writings. Marx's politics of style refers to allegories, metonymies, satire, chistic figures, parables etc. Hartley's paper will give an outline of the main stylistic elements in Marx's main work.2) According to Marx the commodity relation is not just the dominant form of social organisation. It constitutes a specific form of a sensuous-suprasensuous objectivity. Commodities are concrete objects characterized by an enigmatic phantomlike objectivity. In this way the social relations between people appear as what they really are, thing-like. This thing-like relation is, at the same time, also semblance: although practically effective this thinglike relation contains a misrecognition of the truly social nature of the relation between producers. By reconstructing the logics of the sensuous/supra-sensuous nature of the commodity Sami Khatib will discuss Capital as a problematization of (aesthetic) representation and as fundamental theory of allegory in its own right. 3) Capital is not only about the constitution of the commodity as a Gegenstandsform. I also emphasizes the historical production of the disposition of the worker (a specifically disciplined type of subjectivity) as one of the necessary conditions of capital. The incessant reproduction, the perpetuation of the worker himself, is the absolutely necessary condition for capitalist production. As Capital contains such a hidden history of subjectivity, so Johan Hartle's paper will argue, it also addresses the historical constitution of labour as an aesthetic regime (or a specific distribution of the sensible).

## **HM Book Launch The Politics of Style: Towards a Marxist Poetics**

**Daniel Hartley (University of Leeds), Matthew Beaumont, Caroline Edwards**

The aim of this panel is to discuss the newly released paperback version of Daniel Hartleys *The Politics of Style: Towards a Marxist Poetics*, part of the HM Book Series (there was no panel on the hardback version last year). The book develops a Marxist theory of literary style. The first part explains why Raymond Williams, Terry Eagleton and Fredric Jameson came to see style as central to political criticism. It delineates the historical and conceptual preconditions for the emergence of a politics of style, and uncovers an underground current of stylistics within the Marxist tradition from Marx to Barthes. The second part sets out precisely what each thinker has written on style and demonstrates how this came to figure in their overall intellectual and political projects, focusing above all on a detailed reconstruction of Williams's best-known concept, the structure of feeling. Finally, the third part sets out an independent theory of style and makes an ambitious attempt to establish it as a foundational element of a new Marxist poetics.

## **Trotsky as Historian - The Nature and Role of Violence in the Revolution in Russia in 1917 and Beyond**

**Mike Haynes (Independent Scholar)**

Today the conservative argument that revolutions are about bloodlust and bloodshed seems to be dominant and not least in accounts of the Russian Revolution. This picture echoes the view of Russia's privileged classes in 1917. But it was not how the revolutionaries of the time saw it and amongst them not Trotsky. His *History of the Russian Revolution* was written in 1929-30 as an attempt to set out his view of what the revolution was really about. The *History* is widely recognised, even by many of Trotsky's opponents, as one of the great historical accounts of any set of revolutionary events. Trotsky does not shy away from discussing, indeed emphasising, the many facets of violence in 1917. But he argues

that the cruelties and horrors of revolution - which we have no desire either to soften or deny - do not fall from the sky. They are inseparable from the whole process of historic development. Unfortunately there have been few attempts to analyse Trotsky's account of 1917 in historiographic terms. And those accounts which deal with violence usually focus on the discussions of it during the Civil War rather than in 1917. This paper reconstructs Trotsky's analysis of violence and revolution in 1917 as it appears in his History of the Russian Revolution. It uses this reconstruction to challenge the undifferentiated accounts of violence and crime which have spilled over from conservative writing to become a central part of contemporary liberal approaches to 1917 in particular and revolution more generally.

## **Beyond the Gig Economy: Trade Union Insurgents Against Super-exploitation**

**Joe Hayns**

The phrase gig economy is now used across the press and the academy to designate Uber, Deliveroo, TaskRabbit, and so on. However, the phrase obscures commonalities between gig- and non-gig-economy firms, and the deeper processes of accumulation that produce flexible labour regimes. Ultra short-termism, cost-shifting, and Internet-mediated surveillance are less peculiar to the gig economy than indicative of broader, tendential shifts in labour-capital relations in core imperial regions. With reference to Marx's concept of subsumption, and through a description of militant trade unions efforts against the gig economy, I show the fact and importance of challenges against not only gig economy, but the uberisation of life.

## **Marx-Biographies as Political Interventions**

**Michael Heinrich**

During the Cold War, many Marx-biographies draw a picture of the person Marx, which clearly reflected the political position of the authors. Two recent biographies by Sperber (2013) and Stedman Jones (2016) seem to give a more neutral picture, even correcting some distortions of the past. Nevertheless, also these biographies are subtle political interventions, aiming not only to Marx as a person but even more to Marx as a theorist. A new kind of biographical work is necessary, not only for discussing the person in the light of all the information we have, but also for discussing the theoretical work. This work presents itself as a sequence of interrupted and unfinished projects. For a better understanding of these interruptions, we need biographical information about the problems and conflicts behind.

## **“Value Form”: Steps of Marx's research project**

**Michael Heinrich**

Marx's value form concept was disputed a lot during the last decades. However, the meaning and importance of this concept can become clearer, when we look on the development of Marx's analysis, starting in 1857 with Grundrisse, followed by new insights in Theories of Surplus Value (1861-63), the first edition of Capital (1867) and especially the critical discussion in the draft of Dec. 1871-Jan. 1872 and its consequences for the second edition of Capital (1872/73). This development shows that the value form-concept plays different

roles in the critic of Proudhon-type of socialism, the critique of Ricardian type of economics and in constructing Marx's value theory.

## **Migration and Class in the Right-wing Populist Moment**

**Mostafa Henaway (Immigrant Workers Centre McGill University),  
Mark Bergfeld (Queen Mary)**

The question of Migration in this current juncture poses critical questions to the Marxist left, both how do we understand and analyze this current moment and relate to migration and the struggles of migrant workers. As immigrant and migrant workers remain in the eye of the political storm, with an emboldened politics of xenophobia, racism, for political gain, migration has become one of the central issues of our time. The aim of this panel is to discuss the struggles of migrant workers in this current juncture, and its implications for a renewal of working class politics and organization that can go beyond a narrow vision of class. Migrant workers have been at the fault lines of global capitalism they are at the heart of the global economy as migrant workers are increasingly concentrated in such sectors as the logistics industry, and other industries which are unable to be offshored, such as services, healthcare, and food-processing. As conditions facing all workers become more precarious, immigrant and migrant workers become increasingly vulnerable. Despite this they have been organizing not only to defend their own labour rights, but for the working class as a whole. In the United States immigrant workers brought back to life a militant tradition to May Day as witnessed by the historic mass mobilizations, in 2006 on the day without an immigrant where a million people mobilized in the streets of Los Angeles and mobilizations across the United States. In France the sans papiers actions in the Paris region in 2008 under the banner we work here, we live here, we stay here migrant workers organized wild cat strikes, and occupations of restaurants to demand regularization. Migrant and immigrant workers have been forming new models of worker organizations along class lines, which has opened up the possibilities of going beyond business unionism. From the creation of hundreds of workers centres across North America, despite the contradictions and limits, migrant and immigrant workers continue to self-organize. Immigrants have formed their own unions on industrial lines, such as the New York Taxi Workers Alliance, the Independent Workers Union of Great Britain. These examples of worker self-organization and a renewed labour movement by immigrant workers have been central to giving hope for a renewal of working-class politics. How Marxists engage with such struggles, but more importantly how it relates to the question of Migration, and borders, will be central to the future trajectory of rebuilding mass based working class organizations, and power. The aim of the panel is to create a space where Marxists, whether academics, researchers, or organizers can reflect, debate, and analyze the current conjuncture when it comes to the resurgence of right wing authoritarian populism that utilizes a racist, xenophobic program and discourse. How those who prescribe to a historical materialist framework understand the dynamics of the transformations of class and further integration not just of capital but of labour on an international scale manifests in working class politics. How do we organize in such a context and win over broad layers of the working class towards a position of solidarity with other racialized sections of the working class to challenge this resurgence.

## **Marxism and Art History**

**Andrew Hemmingway (New York), Luiz Martins (University of Sao Paolo), Alex Potts (Max Lhoer Distinguished Prof of Art History, Ann Arbor), Gail Day (Leeds)**

To coincide with the HM book series publication of books by Andrew Hemmingway and Luiz Renato Martins, this panel will consider the condition of historical work on art today. It will complement the panels on Marx's Capital and Contemporary Art. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s Marxist art historians held out against the anti-Marxist consensus, now work is almost exclusively focused on the present. Eminent art historians will discuss art and history.

## **Marx's Capital, Surplus-Value and Labour Super-exploitation**

**Andy Higginbottom (Kingston University)**

At the heart of Capital Volume 1, and running through the subsequent volumes, is the distinction between absolute surplus-value and relative surplus-value. These two categories play a central role in the historical arc and logical determinations. The thesis is that labour super-exploitation is a category of surplus-value at the same ontological level as absolute surplus-value and relative surplus-value. Marini (1973; 1978; 1979) applied Capital to the working class condition in underdeveloped Latin America and put labour super-exploitation at the core of his analysis, explaining the connection with Britain's informal empire industrialisation through the supply of cheap commodities. Marini's contribution opens the door to a necessary rethinking of Capital that expands its scope social-geographically to include the increased exploitation of broad strata of the international working class. Marx referred to forms of labour super-exploitation variously as wages below the value of labour power, or colonised labour offsetting the tendency of the rate of profit to fall, or phenomena of competition to be analysed in a later work. I argue that super-exploitation is another sub-category or dimension of surplus value. Labour super-exploitation is synonymous with cheap labour, or a reduced cost of labour power to capital, primarily due to a lower wage. Under greater domination of labour by capital, the labour time necessary to reproduce the worker is reduced. Labour super-exploitation shares characteristics with absolute and relative surplus-value, but cannot be reduced to either. Rather it is the core of different modes of exploitation. Marx recognised further methods of increasing surplus-value labour intensity, skill, fertility. In all, Marx correctly identified no less than six dimensions available to capital of increasing surplus value, but he gives two of them a higher theoretical status. I question that decision, which may have been justified in terms of exposition but, I argue, has been used to justify limited and eventually Eurocentric readings of Capital. Each of the dimensions is constitutive of the production surplus value as such. Marx's Volume 1 analysis focuses on individual capitals drive to increase the surplus value appropriated from the labourers. It follows that if there is increase in a dimension, then that dimension is already part of the constitutive existence of surplus value. For example, the working day has to have a duration for value and surplus value to be produced at all, even before we consider how capital increases surplus value by extending further the length of the working day. Likewise the workers labour has to have a degree of skill and work at a certain intensity for value and surplus value to be produced at all. In its overlong existence capitalism has employed all these methods of increasing surplus-value. Individual capitals and capital classes combine to seek more favourable conditions of surplus value appropriation that provide them with extra surplus value and hence surplus profits. Super-

exploitation is part of the definition of surplus value, but not of simple commodity value, until it is transformed into a modified price of production. We celebrate Capital by taking it forward.

## **The Centrality of Labour in Emerging Green Capitalist Economies**

**Rocio Hiraldo (University of East Anglia /University of Copenhagen)**

The recent promotion of monetary incentives for preserving the environment is being interpreted as a means of advancing capitalist interests. Given Marx's contribution to the theorisation of capital accumulation processes, many scholars have turned to Marx and to the work of various authors drawing on Marx's work when critically analysing green capitalist economies (Foster and Clark, 2009; Gramsci, 1971; Harvey, 2003; Moore, 2011). This has led to the use of concepts such as the metabolic rift to highlight the paradox of the expansion of capital through the promotion of environmental sustainability (Bhm et al., 2012) and to show the negative effects of nature-based tourism on ecological cycles (Neves, 2010). Other authors have turned to Marx's term primitive accumulation and Harvey's notion of accumulation by dispossession to explain the recent appropriation of peasants and indigenous lands through the creation of tourism-oriented protected areas and forestry-related climate change mitigation programmes (Benjaminsen and Bryceson, 2012; Corson, 2011; Kelly, 2011; Ojeda, 2012). The socio-political dynamics around environmental regulation and climate change mitigation have also been explored through a focus on the notion of class as understood by Marx (Vlachou, 2005; Vlachou and Konstantinidis, 2010), leading to the frequent use of Gramsci's term hegemony (Goodman and Salleh, 2013; Igoe et al., 2010). Despite this interest in Marx's work, little attention has been paid to Marx's work on labour and yet it was central in his critique of political economy and it is a central aspect of workers' everyday lives. This paper seeks to fill this gap. It studies how the conditions of workers' labour are being shaped by the social relations of production enabling the development of nature-based tourism and forestry-related payment for ecosystem service (PES) projects in a group of villages in the Sine-Saloum delta, Senegal. Based on a six-month period of primarily qualitative fieldwork research and drawing conceptually on Marx's critique of political economy, it emphasises the centrality of labour in emerging green capitalist economies and emphasises the role of Marx's critique of political economy to three ways in which the social relations of capitalist production in this green economy have shaped labour conditions: a) the privatisation of 1800 hectares of mangrove forest through the creation of a tourism-oriented protected area; b) the activity of work in nature-based tourism and forestry-related PES projects; and c) workers' mobilisations against exploitation and expropriation. The paper shows how, through expropriation, exploitation and class conflict, the green economy benefits capitalist owners while separating workers from the ownership of their labour. Forest privatisation belongs to a broader process of primitive accumulation where workers enable capital accumulation through their adaptations to capital. Production in the green economy is based on social relations that perpetuate poverty, inequality and neo-colonial relations in neoliberal Senegal. The different contribution of nature-based tourism and PES projects to capital accumulation and the importance of class conflict, workers' disagreement and hope in this case study emphasise the heterogeneity and unpredictability of green economies. Socially-committed researchers will benefit from integrating labour and the relations of production in their analyses.

# **Commodification as Social Form: The Political Aesthetics of Contemporary 'Art Practice'**

**David Hodge (The Art Academy)**

The first volume of Karl Marx's *Capital* famously opens with an account of the 'commodity form'. Beginning from the commodity viewed in isolation he progressively unravels the deepest contradictions of capitalism, ascending through ever-more abstract economic levels. This method has long been internalised by Marxist art historians schooled in the October tradition, who commonly approach the question of art's commodification through a formal analysis of individual artworks, from which it is hoped that a broader socio-economic perspective will emerge. However, in his section on commodity fetishism Marx made it clear that it is in fact not possible to locate the foundations of capitalism through an experience of the commodity alone. He showed that the contradictions condensed within commodities result from the nature of capitalist production as a specific social form, emerging from a particular mode of production. *Capital* suggests that this social form is only expressed through commodities in highly refractory and mystifying ways and that its roots must instead be sought in the conditions determining labour. This paper will begin to consider what the notion of commodification as a social form might offer to art historians and to radical practice. It will especially focus on contemporary art, featuring a case study on the work of the Colombian artist Marcos Avila Forero. Focussing on his piece *Zuratoque* (2013), it will argue that, due to certain shifts in the nature of artistic labour, contemporary artists now have a special capacity to develop a politicised aesthetic in which social form emerges into artistic form, becoming palpable within practical activity. Other artists who have taken a similar approach include Emily Jacir, Wendelion Van Oldenborgh, Pilvi Takala and Bouchra Khalili. With reference to Alberto Toscano and Jeff Kinkles' book *Cartographies of the Absolute* (2015), this paper suggests that the approach developed by these and other artists presents an alternative means of orientating the spectator within the dialectical mechanics of capitalism beyond the model of 'cognitive mapping'. Marx treated praxis as the key pivot mediating between subjectivity and the forms of the objective world. Indeed, praxis is a crux in which the individual can experience their own enmeshment within and dependence upon particular configurations of the social. This paper therefore suggests that, through an immanent critique of art practice, contemporary artists may be able to stir the beginnings of strategic consciousness. Without recourse to the logic of representation, critical art has the chance to aid in catalysing a method through which capital can be engaged, analysed and attacked.

## **Booklaunch: Ralf Hoffrogge: A Jewish Communist in Weimar Germany. The Life of Werner Scholem (1895-1940)**

**Ralf Hoffrogge (Institute for Social Movements, Ruhr-Universitt Bochum), Loren Balhorn (Translator, Historical Materialism), Sami Khatib (Freie Universitt Berlin)**

Werner Scholem: Walter Benjamin derided him as a rogue in 1924. Josef Stalin described him as a splendid man, though he soon changed his mind, referring to Scholem as an imbecile, while Ernst Thlmann, chairman of the German Communist Party, warned against the dangers of Scholemism. For the philosopher and historian Gershom Scholem, however, Werner was first and foremost his older brother. The life of Weimar Germany's radical politician Werner Scholem (1895-1940) had many facets. Werner and Gerhard, later

Gershom, had rebelled together against their authoritarian father and the atmosphere of national chauvinism that permeated Germany during the first world war. Inspiring his younger brother to take up the Zionist cause, Werner himself underwent a long personal journey before deciding to join the struggle for Communism. Scholem climbed the party ladder, pushed forward the Bolshevisation of the KPD, only to be expelled as an opponent of Stalin in 1926. In 1933 he was arrested, and in the summer of 1940 Scholem was murdered in Buchenwald Concentration Camp. The Panel The authors presentation will focus on the years 1914-1919, linking Werner Scholems personal development to the conference stream "The Great War, the Russian Revolution and Mass Rebellions 1916-1923". The presentation will discuss the correspondence between Werner and Gershom Scholem during WWI. Both brothers served as conscripted soldiers in the Kaisers Army. In their letters, they spoke out against the war and hoped for socialist post-war utopias. But while Werner, radicalized by the German Revolution of 1918, moved from Social Democracy towards international Communism, Gershom developed a philosophical critique of Kautskyan Marxism and oriented himself towards a left Zionism. Gershom left Germany in 1923 and settled in Jerusalem to become a Scholar of Religious History, specialized on Jewish Mysticism. The discussants will widen the theme, touching Scholems later development, his influence on Weimar Communism and his resistance against the Stalinization of the KPD.

## Interest in Marx and Shaikh

### Bruno Hofig

In his magnum opus *Capitalism* (2016), Shaikh makes clear that he regards Marx's work as part of the tradition of Classical Political Economy. It should be noted, however, that Marx himself criticized Classical Political Economy heavily for treating 'the form of value as something of indifference', as well as for 'never once [asking] the question why [the content of value] has assumed that particular form, that is to say, why labour is expressed in value, and why the measurement of labour by its duration is expressed in the magnitude of the value of the product (Marx, 1990, p. 173). In fact, Marx considered the discovery of the form of value as one of his chief achievements (Marx, 1990, 173 et passim), and argued that the goal of a proper science of the capitalist mode of production must be to elucidate the social conditions that make such form necessary (Marx, 1975; see also Backhaus, 2006). Precisely for that reason, he broke up with the tradition of Political Economy and struggled to develop a radical critique of that theoretical field (Heinrich, 2014). This paper argues that Shaikh's conflation of Classical Political Economy with the Critique of Political Economy plays an important role in his reading of Marx's theory of interest. More precisely, it shows that Shaikh's neglect of the fundamental difference between the form of value and its content leads him to overlook Marx's distinction between money as money and money as capital, which then induces him to conflate the category of interest with that of profit. This in turn prevents Shaikh from appreciating one of the most outstanding features of Marx's theory of interest: its capacity to explain why it is only in the capitalist mode of production that one finds a truly general rate of interest, which 'appears at any given moment as every bit as fixed and uniform as the momentary market price of any commodity' (Marx, 1992, p. 488); why there exists no trend towards the equalization between the rate of interest and the rate of profit; and why, despite the latter, interest tends to appear as the proper form of remuneration of capital - or, to put it differently, why profits tend to appear as a form of interest.

# **Reflections on C.L.R. James's World Revolution, 1917-1936**

**Christian Hogsbjerg (University of Leeds)**

This paper will reflect on C.L.R. James's World Revolution, 1917-36: The Rise and Fall of the Communist International, on the eightieth anniversary of its first publication in 1937. It will therefore explore the political circumstances by which James came to write this work as a leading member of the tiny Trotskyist movement in Britain, and defend World Revolution as a pioneering anti-Stalinist Marxist history of the Communist International, one that was hailed by Leon Trotsky as a very good book and by George Orwell as a very able book. Amidst the centenary of the Russian Revolution of 1917, and the outpouring of debate and discussion both popular and scholarly that will erupt about the meaning and significance of that world-historical event for the twentieth century and the questions of its relevance for the world today, this paper will argue that James's World Revolution deserves to be recognised as a critical work of reference within such discussions. One of the most important if most neglected of works in his corpus, this paper will argue that James's text should be placed alongside Leon Trotsky's The Revolution Betrayed and Victor Serge's From Lenin to Stalin and Twenty Years After as a socialist classic of its time. As the respected historian of the Comintern E.H. Carr put it in his review in International Affairs, the work is decidedly useful as in his analysis of the course of the Russian revolution and of the point at which it took the wrong turning, Mr. James displays commendable independence of judgment and desire to arrive at the truth. As well as discussing the strengths and limitations of the work for historians of the Communist International today, this paper will also explain the editorial work undertaken for the new edition of World Revolution that will be published in 2017 by Duke University Press as part of its C.L.R. James Archives series.

## **Alternative Responses to the Diabolic Crisis: Austerity, Keynesianism or Ecosocialism.**

**Stale Holgersen (Post-doc (Wallanderstipendiat), Institutet för bostads- och Urbanforskning (IBF), Uppsala Universitet.)**

We live in the midst of a dual or epochal crisis. On one hand, the economic crisis from 2007-8 is still not solved, as new class compositions, new technologies and innovations and not least sufficient destruction of capital have not yet emerged. On the other hand the ecological crisis will affect the near future one way or the other: either through massive climate changes or through the fact that we re-organise our economy. I argue also that the forms of (urban) economic organisation we have witnessed during the last few decades (neoliberal-, post-industrial- "creative" -city, etc.) are dying. From this point of departure I will discuss the future of western economies and cities. Based on existing contradictions and current changes in class composition, climate change and new technology I will explore three possible paths in the dual crisis: (fascist?) austerity, (green?) Keynesianism and ecosocialism.



# "The Money-Energy-Technology Complex: Machines as Fetishized Relations of Exploitation"

**Alf Hornborg**

Discussions about global environmental crisis and increasing inequalities rarely attempt to rethink the relation between money and modern technology. The new economic and technological rationalities that accompanied the Industrial Revolution in the core of a world empire became framed in celebratory cultural categories – the growing “economy” and “technological progress” – that obscured the material asymmetries which made them feasible. The detachment of economics from considerations of the physical substance of trade was conducive to the detachment of engineering from considerations of the asymmetric structures of global resource flows. In other words, the purification of economics from Nature was connected to the purification of engineering from world Society. Neither field recognizes that it merely addresses a restricted aspect of a socio-natural process. The effect of these two politically situated and misleadingly sequestered ways of perceiving “development” was to permit the asymmetric resource flows of the British Empire to continue beyond the official end of colonialism, and to absolve capital accumulation from any connection to world poverty. To this day, empirical revelations about ecologically unequal exchange or the political rationale of energy transitions tend not to contaminate our image of the nature of modern technology. Conversely, constructivist insights on so-called sociotechnical systems have not been in the least concerned with global metabolic asymmetries, or with the perspectives of recent world historians on the accumulation of industrial technology in 19th century Britain. An integrated perspective on the money-energy-technology complex illuminates how mainstream economics and engineering, in making asymmetric resource flows invisible, continues to permit core areas of the world-system to appropriate embodied human time and natural space from their global periphery. To identify the roles of monetary and technological fetishism in this world order, we need to understand that the biophysical metabolism of the world-system is itself a sociotechnical system.

## **Ecologies of Surplus Value: The Case of Nitrogen Capital**

**Matt Huber (Department of Geography, Syracuse University)**

There is renewed interest in applying Marx's value theory to ecological relations. A common theme is that Marx's value theory allows us to understand how capitalism does not value much of the free gifts of nature underlying production. Jason Moore focuses on the unpaid work/energy of nature central to accumulation. This paper presents two related critiques of this work. First, by externalizing nature from the circulation of value it fails to understand the ecological relations internal to capital-labor relations. Second, by focusing on value theory in itself, it fails to recognize that Marx's value theory was only one step in a process a set up for his theory of surplus value. In his eulogy at Marx's grave, it was this theory surplus value that Engels isolated as the key discovery uncovering, the special law of motion governing the present-day capitalist mode of production. While Moore and others see nature offering unpaid work external to value/commodities, we also need to understand the ecological relations internal to the unpaid labor/exploitation at the core of the capital relation. On the 150th anniversary of the publication of *Capital*, I argue, as Marx did, that understanding the ecologies of surplus value requires venturing into the hidden abode of production. It is not only that industrial production is most responsible for ecological degradation (e.g., fossil fuel extraction, steel, chemicals), but also the key mechanisms of

surplus value extraction have ecological consequences. Specifically, industrial production yields various extractive technologies central to the production of cheap nature that lowers the value of labor power (and raises the capacities for surplus value). While Moore argues the ecological surplus provided by nature is internal to nature itself (e.g. soil fertility), I argue the industrial production of relative surplus value is more important to understanding how cheap nature is produced. In other words, it is capitals relentless investment in labor-saving technology that ultimately produces cheap nature (and that production often occurs in industrial not natural settings). To illustrate I turn toward the hidden abode of nitrogen fertilizer production in massive carbon-intensive ammonia factories. Competition in this sector lead to the systematic cheapening of nitrogen inputs. This not only cheapens food and thus lowers the value of labor power but also represents one within an ensemble of carbon-intensive technologies critical to dramatic improvements in labor productivity in agriculture. This industrial form of relative surplus value production comes with a cascade of ecological contradictions all along the life cycle of the nitrogen commodity. While this is largely a theoretical argument, I conclude with some important political implications. First, it puts class at the core of ecological politics in terms of focusing not only on who owns/controls the means of production, but also the means of ecological degradation. Second, while much ecological politics focuses on consumption/exchange, it points toward an ecosocialist politics focused on wresting control over production as the key to making a livable world.

## **The Non-Capitalist Character of Economic Growth in the Qing and Why it Matters**

**Christopher Issett**

In recent decades a handful of historians of Asia have challenged the once consensus position that the industrial revolution commenced in England after a prolonged period of prior developments, most notably the agricultural revolution that followed in the wake of the enclosures. Painting with broad strokes, these historians argued that until 1800 neither England nor continental Europe held any distinct advantage in social structure, system of governance, property rights, trade and commerce, or agriculture. These works having all but ignored the contributions of Marxists in general, but also the specific utility of “capitalism” as a general analytical category and tool. This paper argues that only by entertaining the notion of “capitalism” as a distinct set of social property relations and attending rules for reproduction can we simultaneously explain China’s particular path of development and comprehend the causes of the industrial revolution. On the one hand, the industrial revolution is more than a bundle of organizational and technological shifts, no matter how important those were. It is instead the upshot of a generalized social pattern of behavior and set of behavioral requirements made necessary by the appearance of capitalist social property relations. In the absence of those relations, the Chinese economy followed a very different path, one much more analogous to France for instance. Absent a working and theoretically rigorous understanding of capitalism, proponents of the case that China held economic parity with England quickly confuse market activity, inter-regional trade, proto-industrial participation, cash-cropping with accumulation.

## **Civil Society and 'Molecular' Transformation**

**Robert Jackson (Manchester Metropolitan University)**

While contemporary discussions of the macro-processes of state formation often invoke Gramscis conception of civil society, there is less study of the connections between civil society and the molecular aspect of social transformation in the anglophone literature on his thought. Drawing on the recent renaissance in Gramsci scholarship, I will examine the constellation of concepts (personality, individuality, conformism) deployed by Gramsci in order to explore these contested micro-dynamics of social transformation. I will focus, on the one hand, on the category of molecular transformation and on the temporality of social change in Gramscis thought, and, on the other hand, on the nature of the agency that realises it, his historical reflections on the concept of individuality and the formation of the collective will. I will give specific attention to Gramscis use of the category of person to negotiate the strangely composite, fractured and fragmentary character of the lived experience of the subaltern groups under conditions of modernity. Highlighting some resonances between Gramsci and more recent thinkers, e.g. Bourdieu, Deleuze, I will discuss both the resources provided and the challenges posed by Gramscis conception of social transformation. I will argue that these are suggestive sources for the development of political strategies and emancipatory projects in our own time.

## **Marxism and the Abuse of the Enlightenment**

**Aaron Jaffe (The Juilliard School)**

There have been recent attempt at weaponizing radical enlightenment ideas for Marxist ends. Yet, without reference to any shared material ground between Spinozas time and our own this risks working with concepts unmoored from the basis through which ideas are both intelligible and can have a practical force. Beyond a philosophical error, there is a distinctly political danger here, one that Marx recognized in his critique of Blanqui, and even Hegel recognized in his critique of Robespierre: universal enlightenment ideals that lack social grounding are prone to actualization in tremendously counterproductive violence. In this paper I argue that recent instances of recalling an "enlightenment," construct a set of desired ideals on the basis of needs for one or a set of the possibilities left unactualized in the course of such ideal's development and actualization. In the case of the radical enlightenment," "radical" does the double duty of expressing the extremes of previous intellectual and possible contemporary political commitments, while glossing over the difference between the two. Yet, the demand that we return to revive a lost intellectual possibility can be practically valuable only if such a call sheds its idealism, that is, if it pays attention to the conditions, relations, and motivating needs that make lost possibilities, actually possible and in fact desired and needed today. Simply put, if some ideas are to serve as an intellectual forces, they must do so in light of and in being tied to contemporary conditions and struggles. To illustrate, the universality of the enlightenments humanist values, often glosses the ubiquity of class-relations, exploitation, and the socially varying forms of domination through which capital valorizes. But if the idea to which such concepts refer must appear, this appearing must itself be thought in the histories of their material force. For all but the purest idealisms, then, what enlightenment universalism means now cannot be severed from legitimate critique of the relations of power behind its articulation, and the history of those marginalized, excluded, exploited, and murdered in the universalizing tendencies of capital and in the practical application of political claims to universality. This critique was obviously not present in August 1789, and only partially operational in 1791(de Gouges) or 1792 (Wollstonecraft). Yet when such universality is

argued for today, its actually bloody history is, and should be, increasingly born in mind. Today, insisting on returns to an enlightenment universality usually means one has alighted on the highest level of abstraction and is working at a level of logic far divorced from social research. Such an operation air-washes the bloody legacy and continuing force of ideas, opting instead to demonstrate merely ideal value. Marx himself objected to just this kind of move when criticizing the nearly holy notion of right in the practical force and potency of French Revolutionary ideas. Intellectual historians should defend and promote the values and struggles that foster contemporary needs for revolution without taking on the ideological baggage and blind spots rooted in the ideals of a bygone era. Our concepts must be rigorously provisional, and the meta-conceptual apparatus flexible enough to resist the understandable desire to once and for all fix normative and metaphysical grounds to orient radical practice.

## **Latin American Progressive Governments: Passive Revolutions? Transformism? Caesarism? A Necessary Debate**

**Rebeca Jasso-Aguilar (Department of Sociology, University of New Mexico), Jean-Pierre Reed (Department of Sociology, Southern University of Illinois, Carbondale)**

Gramsci linked the concept of passive revolution without revolution to the state transition outlined in Marx's Preface to the Critique of Political Economy. In the past fifteen years some researchers have used the concept to examine cases of social movements in various regions of the world. Recently, progressive governments in Latin America in particular the pink tide -- have been examined as cases of passive revolution, specifically, as cases of transformism and Caesarism, two variations of passive revolution. While we agree that a Gramscian framework is appropriate and that a systematic study of the regions unique context is overdue, we aim to challenge this perspective. We proposed, instead, that the current pink tide in Latin America shows signs of a counter-hegemonic challenge we conceptualized, building on Gramsci (1971, 1987), Glucksmann (1979, 2198) and Callinicos (2010), as anti-passive revolution. In this framework, anti-passive revolutions are the positive resolution of the complex dialectical relationship between the war of position of the dominant classes and the asymmetrical war of position of the subaltern classes, with both groups engaged in a struggle for hegemony and political leadership over society during state transitions. Anti-passive revolutions involve the presence of a vigorous anti-thesis the subaltern forces possessing the popular-cultural and political capacity to establish a balance of forces favorable to subaltern interests. To illustrate the significance of this framework, we aim to evaluate the pink tide in the region as instances of anti-passive revolutions engaged in struggles with the passive revolution of the dominant classes represented by neoliberalism, in what are uncompleted processes of state transition. We specifically focus on Bolivia as a case study, re-evaluating the 1952 Revolution and the antineo-liberalism protests that ushered in the government of Evo Morales.

## **On Syrian Refugees, Berlin, and Soap**

**Zuher Jazmati (London School of Economics)**

When the Syrian uprising from 2011 evolved into a massive and brutal war that cost hundreds of thousands of lives, many of the population escaped their country to find shelter

somewhere else. Germany was one of Europe's countries that granted most of the Syrians asylum thus, leading to new diasporic phenomena and realities in Germany. One of the most popular cities of Syrian refugees became Germany's capital, Berlin. At the moment, ten thousands of Syrian refugees reside in Berlin, a city in which they have established a new existence for themselves and where they have become a visible part of everyday life. Many newly arrived Syrians are now self-employed, with grocery stores opening in various districts and Syrian commodities circulating on the German market. Some of these products have a longstanding history in Syria thus, having a deeper meaning for the local population. In terms of displacement and diaspora, products of the home country gain an importance for self-identity and memories. An example of such products is the historical and very popular Aleppo Soap that is lately also being sold on the Berlin market. The traditional and local production of the soap in Aleppo makes that simple commodity turn into something more complex, representing homeland and the city's cultural heritage. In times of rising racist and right-wing movements in Germany (also in Berlin) and a massive destruction of the city of Aleppo due to the war, products from home appear to have a high relevance for Syrian refugees. This paper aims to analyse the relevance of Aleppo Soap in Berlin, not only for Syrians but also for Germans by looking on the introduction, distribution, and commercialization of the product. As both, Syrian and German shops lately started selling the soap, it is worth looking at the ways in which cultural and traditional products are commercialised in a diasporic space. Additionally, this paper will ask the important question of what emotions the soap prompts in a host country by interviewing Syrian refugees.

## **Relative Autonomy of State? Workers, the Oil Company and the Iranian State before Revolution**

**Maral Jefroudi (IIRE)**

Poulantzas theory of relative autonomy of the state argued that state in a capitalist society is not a mere instrument of the capitalist class and does not at all times serve to the interests of individual capitalists, but takes measures that legitimizes and reproduces the capitalist relations of production, therefore serves, in the long run, to the sustenance of the capitalist system. However, it is not a closed system and the nature of class struggle is effective in shaping the way history unfolds. Working on the social history of labour in the Iranian oil industry between 1951 and 1973, I observed shifting alliances between the oil companies and the Iranian state vis-a-vis workers movement. For example, at the peak point of nationalisation, when the foreign companies and the Iranian states interests seemed to be in grave conflict, we observe close cooperation between the two in suppressing some of workers collective actions, however, in most other cases of labour disputes, the state took sides with the workers. This paper explores the relationship between the Iranian state and the oil companies (the Anglo Iranian Oil Company before 1951 and the Oil Consortium after 1954) particularly at times of labour conflicts. Equipped with discussions on the nature of state in a capitalist society and embeddedness of the economy in the society, I question whether the making of social relations of production in the Iranian oil industry can provide an example of how relative autonomy of state operates. Archival work in US, UK, and Iran provides the sources.

# Capital Transfer and the Transformation Problem

Heesang Jeon

Marx explains that differing organic compositions of capital (OCCs) in different sectors of the economy lead to differing sectoral rates of profit in Chapter 8 of Capital III and that, using numerical examples in Chapter 9, these are equalised to produce a general rate of profit, transforming values into prices of production. In these chapters, the role of competition of capitals across sectors in the equalisation and transformation is presupposed but mentioned only in passing. It is only in Chapter 10 that Marx raises the really difficult question, that is, how does this equalisation of profits or this establishment of a general rate of profit take place, since it is evidently a result and cannot be a point of departure? However, this question and his lengthy discussion of the role of supply and demand in the determination of price of production have drawn little interest, as the literature has been evolving around the problem of transforming cost prices and two equalities. It is, then, the purpose of this presentation to highlight their importance by showing a proper consideration of them poses serious challenges to some of the well-known existing interpretations. For Marx, the significance of capital transfer lies in that it is associated with a structural divergence of the market price from the market value within a sector as supply and demand no longer coincide at the market value, thereby establishing exchange at the price of production. In many cases, this subsequently has cascading effects as the downstream and upstream sectors in the value chain would be subject to more or less demand or supply from the sector. More or less capital (and therefore more or less supply) in a sector can also change the (old) market value or price of production itself, either by adjusting the distribution of individual value (and individual productivity) or by significantly enlarging the gap between supply and demand. It is then problematic to analyse Marx's numerical examples as if they are dealt with the equalisation process in which new prices of production are sequentially determined on the basis of old (supposedly given) prices of production. For the determination of old prices of production themselves, which trigger capital transfer due to differing profit rates, is not completed whilst capitals move across sectors. Rather, Marx's numerical example should be understood as representing a snapshot of the economy in which the equalisation of profit rates has been completed. In addition, the consideration of demand and supply and the impact of capital transfer on them casts doubt on the traditional approach in which sectoral output is assumed to be identical in both value equations and price equations. For example, suppose that the value of a product is 100, and the price of production 80, and 10,000 units are sold at the price of production. This does not guarantee that total value produced in this sector is 1,000,000 because at the price of 100, it is unlikely that all 10,000 units are sold.

## On (Non-)Contemporaneity

Daniel Kashi (Princeton University)

The question that I want to provoke with my presentation is whether or not, and if yes in which way, concepts like (non-)contemporaneity can still help us to understand the rise of the far right that we witness today. When dealing with the question of Race and Capital, one is necessarily also confronted with the question of the theories of history, that underlie the theoretization of that relation. Ernst Bloch's explanation for the rise of German fascism in his book *Erbschaft dieser Zeit* has often been said to set him apart from the orthodoxy of the Second International's Marxism and its respective understanding of history. His notion of non-synchronicity or non-contemporaneity is viewed as an important element of an alternative Marxist theory of history. Roughly thirty years after Bloch's book was published,

Louis Althusser would begin his own attack on Marxist orthodoxy by investing much intellectual energy into unfolding the time of capital and the overdetermination of the main contradiction between capital and labor. As for Bloch, synchronicity and non-synchronicity are important keywords in his endeavor. My presentation will compare both approaches with respect to their implicit and explicit theories of history. I will show that their usage of (non-)synchronicity stands in inverse symmetrical relation to one another. The apparent heterodoxy of Ernst Bloch turns out to be no such thing. Rather, Bloch's theory attempts to save the deterministic notion of history as advocated by the Second International at the moment of its biggest crisis, namely the defeat of the German Communists to the fascists. The theoretical problem that Bloch sought to solve is closely related to an earlier debate on a similar topic: the debate between Lenin and Kautsky on the possibility of the Russian Revolution in October 1917. At stake here of course was the question about the economic stage of a country as the condition of possibility for a communist revolution. Althusser sets out his theory from precisely this debate as well, and like Bloch he sides with Lenin. Strangely, however, they come to exact opposite conclusions. While for Bloch synchronicity is the condition of possibility for the success of a communist revolution, for Althusser it is the time of capitalist ideology.

## **Contemporary British Trotskyism: Party, Sect and Social Movement**

**John Kelly (Birkbeck)**

The argument of this paper is that an explanation of the development, resilience and limited influence of Trotskyist groups should analyze them as bodies comprising three different types of organization: the political party, the doctrinally-based sect and the social movement. The paper is based on extensive archival, documentary, observation and interview research. The paper outlines eight core components of Trotskyist doctrine and then describes the evolution of British Trotskyism from 1950 to the present, up to the Golden Age (1965-85) and continuing through the period of disintegration and decline to the present day. It traces the emergence of seven doctrinal families of Trotskyism, both in Britain and internationally. The doctrines of different groups are maintained through the normal sect mechanisms of oligarchy, charismatic and authoritarian leaders, systems of membership probation and inter-group competition. Strong attachment to doctrine is associated with sectarianism and both are manifested in splits, fragmentation and duplication of resources. There are currently 22 Trotskyist organizations in Britain and 24 Fourth Internationals. As political parties, the Trotskyist groups have always been small and their influence and electoral support has been negligible, both in general and local elections and in elections fought under PR. More broadly no Trotskyist organization has ever led a revolution and they have rarely built mass parties. Their remarkable resilience can be explained inter alia by their acquisition and deployment of social movement resources. They are exceptionally efficient in raising income from highly committed members; they employ relatively large numbers of staff; they publish prodigious quantities of books, pamphlets, newspapers and magazines; they have a narrative, a distinctive, radical critique of capitalism; and they have played a key role in the creation of social movements e.g. the Anti-Nazi League, Anti-Poll Tax Federation, Stop the War Coalition. The paradox of these movements is that whilst they have mobilized large numbers of protestors and sometimes achieved their goals they have made few recruits for Trotskyism. The distinctiveness and radicalism of Trotskyist doctrine has facilitated small-scale recruitment but hindered large-scale and prolonged membership retention. More generally Trotskyism has been irreparably damaged by its romantic attachment to 1917 and a tendency to treat the revolutionary party as a *deus ex machina*. These sentiments are rooted in a failure to grasp the resilience of

liberal democratic institutions, the viability of capitalism and the complexities of popular consciousness and group identities.

## **Liberating the Fields: Towards a Feminist and Eco-Marxist Critique of Genetic Engineering**

**Anneleen Kenis (Division of Geography, University of Leuven)**

Confronted with a rapidly changing terrain of environmental struggle and debate, the question is not only what Marxist thought has to offer to environmental movements but also what Marxism can, or even must, learn from current environmental struggles. This paper draws on the experience of the Belgian Field Liberation Movement, which aimed at stopping a trial field of GMO potatoes in Wetteren (Belgium). This campaign has turned GMOs into one of the most hotly debated environmental topics in Belgian media in the last ten years, even leading to a supportive academic being fired. Critics of the action were found both amongst right-wing and left-wing forces, both joining in a defence of so-called objective and neutral science, technologic development and what is seen as green economic growth. Organised leftist forces supporting the action focused mainly on property relations and patents. A prominent Belgian Marxist scholar argued GMOs wouldnt be a problem in socialism. This paper makes the case for a thorough Marxist engagement with the debate and movements on GMOs. If technology is not neutral, as prominent ecomarxists have argued, what does the non-neutrality of GMOs consist of? This question is gaining in importance as companies, academic institutions and governments are increasingly promoting GMOs as one of the ways to adapt to climate change. It is to be feared that the failure of green markets will open the door for new forms of environmental authoritarianism, including dangerous technologies and forms of geo-engineering such as GMOs. The great risk is that such approaches will not only find support both amongst nationalist and right-wing government, but also among certain green and leftist political forces keenly aware of the urgency of the problem. A critical understanding of GMOs is therefore of crucial importance for the ecomarxist left. On the basis of activist research in and with the Field Liberation Movement and drawing on the work of Feminist Eco-Marxist scholars avant la lettre, such as Maria Mies, this paper analyses the stakes of the struggle against GMOs and develops an eco-Marxist/Feminist understanding of current developments in genetic engineering.

## **Contradictions and Limits of Neo-Developmentalism in Brazil : The Brazilian Working-Class, Unions and the Impeachment Process**

**Lara Khattab (Concordia University)**

The rise of Michel Temer to presidency in the wake of the orchestrated coup against Dilma Rousseff, was accompanied by a direct assault on the rights and privileges of the poor and working classes in Brazil. Temer enacted a series of constitutional amendments that promised to freeze social spending and to reform the pension system while deepening socio-economic inequalities. Despite the fact that the poor and the working classes lose the most in this equation, Brazils unions failed to mobilize in the face of what Harvey describes as a process of accumulation by dispossession (2014). This paper unpacks this puzzle. It raises and explores the following question: What challenges do the poor and working classes encounter in their capacity to mobilize against the assault on their rights? Through



fieldwork conducted over the a period of 5 months and 27 interviews with representatives of the working-class and social movements, the paper reflects on the complex relationship between organized labor, the homeless workers movement (MTST), the landless peasants movement (MST) and the state. This paper aims to offer a critical analysis of the effects of PTs economic and inclusionary politics on social class mobilization and organization but more specifically on the poor and working classes. More broadly, the researcher hopes to bring a better understanding of the challenges that undermine subaltern classes in their roles as agents of social and political change.

## **Aounism and the rise of Army populism in post-war Lebanon**

**Elia el Khazen**

Post-civil war Lebanon has seen the intertwining of neoliberal, authoritarian and sectarian policies fuelled by the momentum of a disaster capitalism masking as a strategy for reconciliation and reconstruction. This contradictory and yet enduring form of hegemonic governance, exists alongside regional and geopolitical configurations that have reshaped social relations and political alignments in the country. Since the mid-1990s, this particular historical conjuncture has also witnessed the momentous rise of Lebanese army generals earmarked for the Lebanese presidency, riding a chauvinistic, nationalistic, right-wing populist momentum that paints the army as a neutral entity.

I would like to use the concept of Bureaucratic Caesarism and Bonapartism to explain how all three presidential candidates that have successfully earned the majority of votes in parliament (Emile Lahoud 1998-2007, Michel Sleiman 2008-2014 and Michel Aoun in 2017) were able to get elected and pursue their authoritarian programs by abiding by the three simple strategies of sectarian representation, war on terror credentials, and properly navigating political realignments in line with local, regional and global contradictions.

## **New Developments in Eco-Marxism**

**Jim Kincaid (Independent)**

Recent developments in eco-Marxist research suggest the need to reconsider some of the ways in which Marx's account of the determinants of profit rates is deployed in current empirical work and debate. Jason Moores *Capitalism and the Web of Life* highlights how capital (from the 16c onwards) has used strategies of appropriation to advance labour productivity. This has helped to keep the organic composition of capital low, and thus protect the rate of profit. For example: (1) cheap labour-power from the domestic, peasant and colonial sectors; (2) land obtained through dispossession; (3) raw materials, energy, and other forms of circulating capital; (4) the biosphere used as a freely available sink in which to offload the pollution and waste that accompany capitalist production and circulation. Moore argues that central themes of Marx's value theory - such as exploitation and the increase in labour productivity via mechanisation - need to be supplemented by accounts of the forces of production, and the frontiers of potential commodification available to capital at any given historical moment. Moore's key question is whether we face a drastic decline in the commodity frontiers available for the appropriation of means of production to underpin labour exploitation and counteract resource depletion. Here his work cross-connects with the influential Marxist ecology of Burkett, Foster and others associated with the *Monthly Review*. Andreas Malms deeply researched *Fossil Capital* argues that value theory must

give due weight to the formal and the real subsumption of labour. The switch from water to fossil energy in the 19c allowed labour discipline to be embedded in the means of production employed. Questions of forces of production, frontiers of capitalist appropriation, and their current sustainability, have been posed in some brilliant interventions by the radical geographer Sara Nelson. In a sympathetic, but combative, critique of Moore, she discusses new ways in which life-forms and energies are being subsumed by capital as means of production. She attacks the currently fashionable thesis that capitalist profitability can be sustained by capturing the surpluses produced by organic life. The work of these scholars, and others, suggests that we need to look again at Marx's account of the complex interplay: (1) between forces of production and the generation of value and surplus-value; and (2) between appropriation and exploitation.

## **Revolution, Energized: Theorizing Petro-Capitalism**

**Jordan B Kinder (University of Alberta)**

If communism is Soviet power plus electrification, then global capitalism as we continue to know it is Western state and corporate power plus fossilization. Lenins oft-quoted adage and its fossil-fuelled counterpart demonstrate an important relationship between dominant modes of production and the forms of energy available at a given historical moment. Marx observed as much when in 1847s *The Poverty of Philosophy* he gestures towards a quasi-deterministic, almost causal relation between modes of production and the forces of production that fuel them. The hand-mill gives you society with the feudal lord; the steam-mill, society with the industrial capitalist (92, emphasis added), he writes. While much has been written on this statement, Marx's emphases on the significant role of forces of production made possible by specific energy forms in shaping social relations have been largely overlooked in Marxist theory and criticism and are only recently gaining attention, due in no small part to the rise in ecologically-focused theory over the past decades from thinkers such as John Bellamy Foster.[1] This paper contributes to the emergent work that addresses this gap by posing two important questions. First, to what degree are dominant energy sources and dominant modes of production related? And, second, what can this relationship tell us about the material conditions that shape the possibilities for both an energy transition beyond fossil fuels and a political revolution beyond capitalism? To answer these questions, this paper builds on Lenins and Marx's observations regarding the energetic foundations of society, performing a historical materialist analysis of dominant modes of production and their respective dominant energy sources. Through this analysis, I aim to demonstrate the intimate, symbiotic relationship between oil as a dominant energy source and late capitalism as a dominant mode of production to ultimately argue that questions of energy transition that underpin much environmentalist discourse and activism today are equally questions of political revolution. Just as capitalism in Marx's formulations is a necessary phase of history from which to enter communism, so too must we work through and move beyond reliance on fossil fuels; theorizing this necessity, moreover, provides a materialist basis on which to reconcile the historical tensions between red and green politics. Works Cited Huber, Matthew T. *Lifblood: Oil, Freedom, and the Forces of Capital*. University of Minnesota Press, 2013. Malm, Andreas. *Fossil Capital: The Rise of Steam Power and the Roots of Global Warming*. Verso, 2015. Marx, Karl. *The Poverty of Philosophy*. London: Martin Lawrence Limited, 1847. Print. [1] See, for example, Matt Huber's *Lifblood: Oil, Freedom, and the Forces of Capital* (2013) and Andreas Malm's *Fossil Capital: The Rise of Steam Power and the Roots of Global Warming* (2015).

# Looking Forward, Looking Back What can we Learn from Gay Liberation/Lesbian Feminism (1969-1976) for the Current Struggle Against the Neoliberal Queer?

Gary Kinsman

Drawing on my historical materialist informed historical sociological investigation of the making of the neoliberal queer in the Canadian context (Kinsman, 2016, 2017) I explore the organizing of gay liberation and lesbian feminism in the period from 1969 to 1976 in the global north to raise questions about what we can learn from this early period of radical organizing for current and future struggles against the neoliberal queer. Contesting those accounts like that of Tim McCaskell in *Queer Progress, From Homophobia to Homonationalism* (2016) that dismiss the significance of gay liberation/lesbian feminism and that of Peter Drucker in *Warped* (2015) that while not dismissing the significance of this activism largely views it as a blip between homophile organizing and the emergence of gay normality I argue that there is a lot to learn from this period of organizing for our struggles in the historical present. Without romanticizing this activism or engaging in a nostalgia for it since it had many contradictions including often an elitism towards people in bars and ghettos; continuing sexism despite an ostensible commitment to feminism on the part of many gay liberation men; and almost from the beginning tensions with trans organizing this was also a form of organizing that challenged gender, racialized and to some extent class relations; had a broader more radical politics that supported opposition to the war in Vietnam, and other movements of oppressed people; that rejected the privatization of queer sexualities and opposed police repression and rejected collaboration with the police, that challenged centrally psychiatric and psychological forms of oppression, that was not largely based on essentialist approaches to sexuality and that challenged heterosexuality as a social institution. This wave of struggles was part of a broader global cycle of struggles that lasted into the early 1970s. This organizing also created the grounds for attempts to explore connections between marxism and sexual oppression including the emergence of the Gay Left Collective, and various gay Marxist study and action groups, and important discussions of class within lesbian feminist organizing. I argue there is much to be learned from this organizing for the very different historical and social contexts that we face in the historical present with the need for a broader and more radical politics that centrally addresses racialized gendered class politics and struggles as part of the resistance to homonationalism and the neoliberal queer. There is a need to actively resist the social organization of forgetting of this period of organizing. I conclude by looking at the social forces that undermined this liberationist organizing including the internal contradictions within gay liberation and lesbian feminist organizing but also the decomposition of the global part of, the shift in response to this global cycle of struggles towards neoliberal attacks on working class, poor, and oppressed people around the world, the shift towards more essentialist approaches to gender and sexuality and the masculinization of layers of gay men that started to take place by the mid-70s, and of the emergence of a focus on rights and human rights approaches which worked to decompose (and forget) a number of the aspects of liberationist organizing. These social processes also help to set the stage for the emergence of the neoliberal queer. References Peter Drucker, *Warped: Gay Normality and Queer Anti-Capitalism* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2015). Gary Kinsman, *From Resisting Bath Raids to Charter Rights: Queer and AIDS Organizing in the 1980s*, in Carroll and Sarker, ed., *A World to Win, Contemporary Social Movements and Counter-Hegemony* (Winnipeg: ARP Books, 2016), pp. 209-232. Gary Kinsman, *Queer Resistance and Regulation in the 1970s: From Liberation to Rights*, in Gentile, Kinsman and Rankin ed., *We Still Demand! Redefining Resistance in Sex and Gender Struggles* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2017), pp.

137-182. Tim McCaskell, *Queer Progress, From Homophobia to Homonationalism*, (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2016).

## **Whither 'Anti-fascism'?**

**Stefan Kipfer (York University, Toronto, Canada)**

A few short years after the Revolution against Capital, various currents of the left were forced to grapple with fascism as a new political problem. It is an understatement to say that, during the interwar period, the strategic puzzles posed to revolutionaries by fascism were never resolved satisfactorily. Today, the problematic of fascism is back with a vengeance. It threatens to outgrow what Stuart Hall called authoritarian populism, either because explicit fascist elements have risen from margin to centre within the populist right, or because forces with direct links to fascist or neo-fascist histories have outflanked their radicalized counterparts in the bourgeois right. The latter case applies to France. There, the resurgence of the Front National (which appeared moribund for a second time a mere ten years ago) has put the problem of antifascism back on the agenda with a vengeance. During the 2017 Presidential election, which saw the FN garner a record number of votes in the second round, some commentators announced the death of antifascism when they noticed the disintegration of the electoral republican front that had led to the massive defeat of the FN's presidential candidate in 2002. Taking issue with this hasty conclusion, this paper presents preliminary conclusions from research on the state of anti-fascism in France. It does so not by offering a singular strategic perspective but by discussing insights and dilemmas that emerge from a constellation of forces, socialist, anarchist, syndicalist, left-populist and anti-racist.

## **The Role of Law and the State in the Emancipatory Process**

**Dimitrios Kivotidis (University of the West of England), Natalia Delgado (Birkbeck, University of London)**

The question of law and the state has been widely debated in Western European Marxist thought, and more specifically in several aspects of the works of Lukacs, Poulantzas and Althusser. However, these works have not in a coherent and unambiguous manner addressed the issue of the role of law and the state during emancipatory processes. In fact, Western European Marxist thought in many respects has influenced the abandonment of the revolutionary road to emancipation by Western European parties. In our project, we will be looking at Marxist critiques of law and the state in order to address this problem. The two main themes that this project focuses on are, on the one hand, the Marxist critique of bourgeois state and law, and on the other, the role of the state and law in the transition to socialism. A Marxist critique of bourgeois state and law can begin with the opposition of Hegel to Savigny and the German Historical School of Law, followed by Marx's Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right. On this basis, a discussion of the comments of Lenin, Lukacs, and Pashukanis on this topic, will culminate with a critical examination of Poulantzas' analysis of the state as a relation similar to capital. This position will be criticised as enhancing a perception of the state, not only as relatively autonomous but as completely separated from class interests and socio-economic processes. With regards to the second main theme of the paper, i.e. the role of state and law in the transition to socialism, we will examine the work of E. Pashukanis and his initial position that all law is bourgeois law, together with his own self-criticism of the above position. Pashukanis' position on role of

socialist law in the dictatorship of the proletariat will be critically discussed with reference to Lenin's analysis of law in the State and Revolution. As Marxist legal scholars, we argue that new engagement with the question of law in particular and the state in general is needed in order to address the abandonment of the revolutionary road to emancipation by Western European parties, to stress the necessity of transcending bourgeois parliamentarism, and to help develop new legal thought to approach our research question. In conclusion, this project, by closely examining European Marxist thinkers, sheds new light on the neglected issue of the role of law and the state in emancipatory processes.

## **Imperialism, International Law and Race in the Haitian Revolution**

### **Robert Knox (Editor, Historical Materialism)**

The Haitian Revolution has become an increasingly important touchstone in a number of modern debates: particularly those about the intersection of liberalism, human rights and racism; capitalism and racism and perhaps most importantly the prospect of anti-racist revolutionary movements. This paper attempts to engage with the specifically legal elements of the Haitian revolutionary process through the prism of the Marxist tradition. In particular drawing on Pashukanis commodity-form theory it examines how law mediated the close relationship between racialisation, slavery and the extension of French colonialism to the Island. It then tracks the way in which the Haitian revolutionary process was able to invoke racialised legal categories in order to challenge French domination: particularly in the form of the revolutionary constitution. In so doing, it examines how Haitian revolutionaries attempted to use legal forms in order to refashion blackness as a political category that might challenge the status quo. The paper then attempts to draw out wider lessons for the possibility of radical anti-imperialist attempts to utilise (international) law.

## **The Experience of Defeat: on Max Horkheimer's Concept of Critique**

### **Stathis Kouvlakis (King's College London)**

Max Horkheimer is without any doubt the central figure of what became later known as the Frankfurt School but was in the 1930s essentially a constellation of independent socialist intellectuals gravitating around the Institute for Social Research. What characterizes from the outset Horkheimer's perspective is his acute perception of the tragic impotence of the German workers movement which will eventually lead to its defeat by Nazism. Horkheimer's entire intellectual endeavour can, and actually should, be understood as an attempt to draw the conclusions of that situation at a theoretical level. He will formulate it first in terms of an interdisciplinary approach unifying philosophy and social sciences under the aegis of the Marxian critique of political economy, and then, in what can be considered as his most programmatic text (Traditional and Critical Theory 1937), as critical theory, a label that will experience an extraordinary fortune ever since. The paper will discuss the notion of critique that is implied in Horkheimer's writings up to the 1937 text in the light of the political and intellectual conjuncture, with particular reference to Gramsci's elaboration on the philosophy of praxis, in many ways the only comparable attempt to draw the philosophical conclusions of the defeat of the European workers movement confronted to the rise of fascism. The discussion will thus point out the productive insights as well as the elements that will lead Horkheimer to gradually distance himself from his initial commitment to socialism and Marxist theory. The concept of critique is the terrain in which

this turn will be played out, leading to a the a weak version that will become the signature of the post-war Frankfurt School.

## **The Origins of Enmity in International Law**

### **Tor Krever (University of Warwick)**

The proposed paper explores the ideological origins of piracy in international legal thought. The figure of the pirate is today the epitome of enmity in international law: *hostis humani generis*. Where and when did this figure first emerge? Against transhistorical accounts which project the pirate backwards in an unbroken arc from the present to antiquity, the paper locates its origins in the emerging capitalist world economy of the long 16th century. The pirate as a figure of universal enmity, the paper argues, emerged first as a figure of religious enmity rooted in the inter-imperial Habsburg-Ottoman rivalry of the 16th-century Mediterranean and the threat posed by Islamic depredations to a universalising Christianity. That figure of religious enmity, the paper suggests, was exported to the Atlantic by an Iberian empire which saw in Protestant depredations the same threat to Habsburg efforts to extend a universal Christian commonwealth to the New World. With the development of an early capitalist economy and the growing coincidence of imperial interests and trade, the nature of the enmity attaching to the pirate began to change. One of the first theorisations of this new enmity, the paper suggests, is found in the work of Grotius, who renders the pirate not as a religious enemy, but an enemy of commerce and free trade. It is this new secular figure of enmity, the paper concludes, that is produced and reproduced in modern legal thought, the pirate now not an enemy of a universal Christendom but a universal enemy of capitalism.

## **The Riddle of the Revolution: Between Truth and Totality**

### **Lea Kuhar**

The Marxist doctrine is omnipotent because it is true said Lenin in his famous passage in *The Three Sources and Three Component Parts of Marxism*. Lenins professed confidence in Marxs rightfulness in the quote may leave many astounded, since it provokes a certain confusion. How is it possible to claim so confidently that Marxist doctrine was omnipotent? How is it possible to argue for its omnipotence with ones own conviction of its truth? The paper will analyze the epistemological conditions of Lenins quote by trying to answer two main questions: how was it possible for Lenin to say what he said and why does it seem impossible for todays political leaders to claim the same thing? There are two concepts that were (and, we claim, still are) of major importance for revolutionary thought the concept of totality and the concept of truth. In the first part of the paper we will try to show how Lenins claim is supported by the Hegelian dialectics and its development in Marxs materialist turn in *Capital*. We will show the inherent problems of the Hegelian dialectics that after Lenins attempt to turn revolutionary theory into revolutionary practice, contributed to the horrors of the Stalinist regime. In the second part of the paper, we will show how postmodern politics is based on an interpretation of the world in which there is no totality and where (exactly because of this non-existing totality) a multiplicity of non-exclusive truths can flourish. The aim of our paper is to present the conceptual shift in Marxs theory that enabled him to critically analyze the capitalist mode of production and to comprehend the concepts of truth and totality in scientific terms. Through Adornos critique of the Hegelian dialectic we will try to show how Marxs conceptual shift can be repeated and indicate the necessary conditions for re-establishing a singular moment of truth and social

totality without repeating the mistakes of the real existing socialisms of the first part of the 20th century and without falling into the trap of the post-modern plurality of its second half.

## **Anti-Caste Movements and Bolshevik Revolution- Possible Routes to Socialism**

**Nachiket Kulkarni (Centre for Political Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru  
University, New Delhi)**

The proposed paper is an attempt to understand the reception of Bolshevik revolution and ideas of socialism within the anti-caste social revolutionary movements in India in the early part of 20th century. Anti-caste movements led by oppressed-caste leader/thinkers were the expression of radical enlightenment thought in Indian conditions. Even though the radical enlightenment legacy of Marxism has been explored, common tendency is to see anti-caste movements and socialist movements as mutually exclusive and then to argue for their complementariness or antagonism. One way to highlight the neglected aspect of shared roots is to analyse the positive assessment of Bolshevik Revolution by oppressed-caste leaders-intellectuals. Through this inquiry one seeks to identify possible routes to socialism emerging from within these movements, which can extend the frontiers of socialist project itself. The impact of the Bolshevik revolution and socialism on the struggle for national liberation (to varying degree on various political currents Indian National Congress, Socialist Revolutionaries like Bhagat Singh and Communist Party) has been extensively documented and analysed. Broadly speaking these currents shared a favourable assessment of Bolshevik Revolution, primarily due to the unequivocal support extended by the USSR and Comintern to the anti-colonial liberation struggles. However the favorable assessment of the same among the anti-caste social revolutionary movement -essentially those inspired/initiated by Jotirao Phule and Dr.B.R.Ambedkar in Maharashtra - has not been given due recognition. What were the factors that led to this favorable assessment despite the fact that the question of caste was not specifically addressed by the Comintern, like the question of black liberation. Indeed it was due to the active efforts and intervention of the black socialists/communists, the Comintern recognized the specificity of Negro Question and the Black Communists in the USA looked towards the Cominterns intervention to force the reluctant CPUSA leadership to give primacy to the Negro Question. No such engagement between the leaders/intellectuals of anti-caste movements and Comintern seems to have happened which could possibly have appraised it of the specificity of caste question in India. Nevertheless in 1920s and 30s nonbrahmin oppressed caste activist-intellectuals from Phule-ite school such as V.R.Shinde, Dinkarrao Javalkar, Shankarrao More, Buddhist Scholar Dharmanand Kosambi and to certain extent Dr.Ambedkar himself noted and stated through their writings and organizational activity (which in certain cases meant advocacy or even formation of political fronts espousing socialism and/or Marxism) the emancipatory promise of socialism and/or the Bolshevik revolution in Indian conditions. Certain key questions are sought to be explained through the paper. What aspects of the Bolshevik revolution and socialism were found to be addressing the anti-caste project by the aforementioned thinkers? How did they envision socialism in Indian conditions, and, in what ways it was different from the understanding of the official Marxist/communists? Analysing the possibility of anti-caste movements providing the locus for the emergence of socialist political project (when the official Marxists/communists have at best partially espoused anti-caste project) and studying their features can contribute to enrichment of the socialist conception of democracy. For these movements essentially sought a thoroughgoing democratization of the Indian social order based on the inherently undemocratic institution

of caste. Do these efforts hold valuable insights for embedding democracy in a socialist project, itself?

## Value in György Lukács's Ontology

Murillo van der Laan

At the end of the 1950s, György Lukács proposed a rebirth of marxism that, in his own terms, would be able to face the neopositivists developments of the bourgeois philosophy and the theoretical distortions of Marx advanced by stalinism. For this, he engaged in a philosophical investigation that had as a goal a Marxist Ethics. Though he could not finish his research, he left an ontological reading of Marx. In the core of this conception, we find labour as the original phenomenon of the social being and the model of praxis. Investigating this complex, Lukács presented us his ontological idea of value as an intricate and dynamic relation between teleology and causality that proposes a historical, immanent, unitary and objective perspective that does not abdicate a reflexion about the consciousness' active role in the causal network of reality. His analysis focuses on the unfolding and connection between different forms of valuation: those related to use values, to economic values and to the range of "not economic" values. It is this valuation concept that this presentation takes as its object, advancing the hypothesis that the lukácsian conception is fruitful to interpret values, since undertakes a dialectical comprehension of objectivity and subjectivity in valuation processes, trying to keep distance from the conceptions that obliterate the role of consciousness in the reproduction of the social being, but also from the ones that overestimate this same role. Nevertheless, regarding economic values, Lukács strain the comprehension of Marx's labour theory of value, interpreting it as valid to all social formations. This represents a limit, in our provisional understanding, to the cognition of these social formations and also to his concept of human emancipatio

## The Non-Capitalist Economics and Politics of Post-Revolutionary France

Xavier Lafrance (Université du Québec à Montréal)

In spite of the devastating critique of the “social interpretation” offered by a series of “revisionist” authors, the French Revolution is still arguably understood by a majority of social scientists as a gateway to capitalist development in nineteenth century France. This paper suggests that the reverse is true: the French revolution actually consolidated non-capitalist social property relations in the agrarian as well as in the industrial sectors of the country. To understand this, we need to rely on an appropriate definition of capitalism – one that allows us to properly grasp its historical specificity as a mode of exploitive production. Capitalism implies a particular type of market; i.e. *competitive* markets, which remained absent in France before the Revolution and for decades afterward. Capitalist market imperatives impose the subsumption of labor by capital. A phenomenon that was also almost completely inexistent in France until the second half of the nineteenth century. This absence of capitalist social property relations entailed specific patterns of economic development, and, as a consequence, nineteenth French industrialization lagged far behind British industrialization. The absence of capitalist social property relations also implied specific patterns of class struggles and of class



politics. The French ruling class continued to rely mostly on extra-economic and non-capitalist modes of surplus appropriation until the last decades of the nineteenth century. The French state remained a crucial nexus of class exploitation. As consequence, class struggles retained a characteristically political form over the period. The central aim of this paper will be to show that these specific patterns of economic development and of class struggles can only be properly grasped if we base our analysis on a proper definition of capitalism.

## **Crisis as Method: Zavaleta Mercado and the Making of a 'Motley' Marxism**

**Felipe A. Lagos (Independent researcher)**

Bolivian Marxist Rene Zavaleta Mercado has recently gained some acknowledgment in international Marxist discussion, in particular because of his concepts of 'motley society' (sociedad abigarrada) and the reflections on dual power. In this paper, I will offer a reading of Zavaleta Mercado that considers his methodological and epistemological elaborations in a political and contemporary way. I focus on the constant and productive disquiet in the development of Zavaleta's Marxism: the question on the Marxist 'method' -as though it were a-historically defined- vis--vis the underdeveloped, backward and fragmented unity we call 'Bolivia', apparently far away from Marxism's conceptions of capitalist society or class formation. More concretely, I seek to describe Zavaleta's as a trajectory whereby a national (and fairly nationalist) hypothesis, constantly haunting the Marxist orthodoxy, fostered the contours of a plurinational (and, in that sense, transnational) Marxism. By means of the analytical strategy of 'crisis as method', Zavelta found a pathway to set Marxism as a critical and subaltern perspective for motley or disjointed societies.

## **Right-Nietzscheanism, Left-Nietzscheanism: A Historical and Conceptual Perspective**

**Ishay Landa (The Open University, Israel)**

This paper will explore one of the most potent counter-revolutionary ideologies of the 20th century: Nietzscheanism. Any attempt to comprehend the ideological struggles of the past, as well as to confront future challenges, must grapple with the role of Nietzsches ideas as a major force combating democracy, socialism and communism. At the same time, it must offer a satisfactory answer to the baffling phenomenon of left-wing Nietzscheanism. While Nietzsche was overwhelmingly present in the fascist and the National Socialist camp a presence which is well-known but still insufficiently appreciated or understood, and is all too often dismissed as a mere abuse and appropriation of the philosophers lofty ideas he also strongly impinged on left-wing ideology, especially in socialist and anarchist ranks. In the postwar period, moreover, Nietzsche was indispensable in the formation of various left-wing post-Marxisms, especially postmodernism in its different expressions: Foucauldian, Deluegian, deconstructionist, post-colonialist and so on and so forth. This left-wing Nietzsche is often taken as evidence that the philosopher, rightly understood, can serve as an ally of radical emancipatory struggles. My presentation will point to some of the fundamental problems with this supposition. Nietzsches usefulness for radical thought and practice will be queried with relation to different questions: was Nietzsche an anti-capitalist? Can Nietzsche really serve to counter the current recrudescence of various forms of authoritarian populism and neofascism? Most importantly, the indisputable fact that many

people on the left have taken to Nietzsche should not obscure the really important question of exactly what they have taken from him (and, equally, what Nietzsche has taken from them). In other words, what does the encounter with Nietzsche do to the right and what does it do to the left? How does it impact both camps? Suggesting an answer to these questions will be useful, I hope, for the purposes of an ideological reorientation of socialism, and particularly of Marxism.

## **Commodification of the Labour of Nature**

**Sanjay V Lanka (University of Sheffield)**

The focus of this paper is to develop the concept of commodification of the labour provided by nature, within the context of agriculture. Under the guise of promoting the growth of sustainability in agriculture among smallholder farmers, alliances between corporations and NGOs have been set up in the name of eradicating hunger, but with the goal of representing the interests of large agribusiness corporations. They promote the industrial agriculture model, based on intensive technology, use of chemical fertilizers, herbicides, pesticides, and high-breed seeds which is ideologically consistent with the green revolution, which had ruinous effects on the environment. A response to this has been the development of Organic agriculture based on the development of standards for agriculture that preserve the environment on and around the farm. This has enabled farmers to utilize the ecosystem services provided by nature to replace the chemical inputs mandated by industrial agriculture. However, despite the ability to produce higher quality crops that would sell for a higher price at the retail level, the farmers who have transitioned to Organic farming, have to take on the costs of Organic certification. This is because Organic farming mandates that Organic farmers also have to invest additional labour power for setting up and maintaining accounting systems and documentation on an ongoing basis. Further, when these farmers continue to sell into the conventional corporate supply chains, the amount of value that they get for their produce is limited and most of the value is extracted by corporations at the retail end of the value chain. Consistent with the alienation of labour due to its commodification in the process of producing agricultural commodities, there is an alienation of nature as well due to the commodification of the environmental services that it provides in the case of Organic farming. In this paper I provide evidence of the commodification of nature from fieldwork done with an Organic certified coffee producer co-operative. I also provide evidence of an alternative approach through fieldwork with a community of organic farmers, who have developed short supply chains where they are able to circumvent corporate owned value chains and sell their produce directly to the consumer. This transition to farmer owned value chains is a process which is in its infancy, but does provide hope for the future.

## **From the Heading the Hamburgs Left to becoming Stalins German, Ernst Thlmann c.1918-1929**

**Norman LaPorte (University of South Wales)**

The public image of Ernst Thlmann (1886-1944), last chairman of the Weimar KPD, is still heavily influenced by the personality cult that was posthumously built around him East-Germany. This paper will uncover the historical Thlmann. It starts with locating Ernst Thlmann in the ultra-left district of Hamburg, showing how the origins of his radicalism can be explained in terms of his experiences in the pre-war SPD and German Transport Workers Union (DTV) and, after the failure of the Revolution of 1918 to bring about

socialism, his incremental adoption of the Bolshevik model as the best way of serving the future German revolution. However, initially at least, Thlmann represented those independent-minded ultra-leftists among Hamburgs dockworkers who opposed the united front tactic and pushed for revolution in 1923. Finally, the paper will account for the KPDs Stalinisation and Thlmann role in this process.

## **Built on Sand: The Hyperinflationary Economics of the German Revolution 1923**

**Sean Larson (New York University)**

The events of the ‘German October’ in 1923 represent a crucial turning point in the revolutionary wave following the Russian Revolution. Leaders of the Communist International at the time considered the failure of the German Revolution to take place in 1923 as a devastating defeat, while historians ever since have debated the very possibility of revolution so long after the First World War. Following Trotsky, these assessments have largely hinged upon a distinction between the ‘subjective’ and ‘objective’ factors in the German Revolution. Although questions of revolutionary policy have been masterfully analyzed in detail by historians, relatively little attention has been given to the role of the strange development of the German economy during this period. This paper offers a contribution toward the scholarship on the German Revolution through an examination of the German inflation that challenges this subjective/objective paradigm.

Drawing on the extensive German-language research since the mid-1970s, this paper will attempt a re-reading of the postwar German inflation and hyperinflation from a class-struggle standpoint. I first develop a model for understanding the interaction between the structure and productive capacity of German industry, the role of reparations and the growing public debt, Germany’s inflation-fuelled postwar export advantage, and the domestic political landscape surrounding key junctures in the diminishing value of the mark. This exposition will then be used to demonstrate that the infamous inflation in Germany was not a natural disaster, or the imposition of some immutable objective law. The German inflation, and the hyperinflation to which it gave rise, were direct and unavoidable results of politically-motivated government decisions against taking necessary stabilization measures, even when the existence of German capitalism was clearly on the line.

I will show that the actions of both heavy industry and the Reichsbank were mediated through an acute sensitivity to the labor market in Germany, determining a peculiar path for postwar inflation that diverged significantly from that of other western industrial countries from mid-1920 onward. Specifically, the onset and development of the United Front policy of the Communist International made deep inroads into the stability of the German labor market, provoking disturbances in the supposedly ‘objective’ laws of the German economy, and the flight into hyperinflation.

These dynamics, it will be argued, not only establish the objective existence of a ‘revolutionary situation’ from 1918 to the end of 1923, they are also essential to understanding how the KPD’s United Front policy worked in practice and its potential for success.

## **Bolshevism as a Revolutionary Collective**

**Paul Joseph LeBlanc (LaRoche College)**

The Russian Revolution of 1917 is the product of converging crises in political, social, economic, cultural, military realms. Many have insisted, however, that a key element in determining the revolutionary outcome of 1917 was the so-called vanguard party represented by the Bolsheviks led by Lenin. An equating of Bolshevism with Lenin, however, obscures more than it illuminates. More useful is an examination of clearly reveals a convergence of complexities within the realms of party structures, personalities, and political outlooks. One set of complexities involves the organizational conceptions that animated Bolshevism, involving democratic centralism, an interplay of democracy and cohesion, as well as an interplay of centralized leadership and relative local, on-the-ground autonomy. Another involves the pulls and tugs of the diverse and vibrant personalities among the Bolsheviks particularly at the leadership level. Yet another sub-set of complexities involves the employment of a relatively complex ideology (Marxism), which in itself is open to divergent interpretations, and which can be applied in different and sometimes contradictory ways to political, social and economic realities that are themselves complex and ever-changing. There is also a complexity in the ongoing tension between those leaders engaged in developing and adapting Marxist theory on the one hand, and the practical on-the-ground organizers on the other and among these practical organizers we can perceive tensions between those whose primary focus is to maintain the organizational structures and cohesion of Bolshevism, and others whose primary focus is to influence and lead mass struggles and mass movements.

## **Jos Carlos Maritegui on the Russian Revolution**

**Nicolas Lema Habash (University of Paris 1, Pantho-Sorbonne)**

In 1923, Peruvian philosopher and journalist, Jos Carlos Maritegui, gave a series of lectures to the Students Federation in Lima on the subject History of the World Crisis. The topic of the fifth conference, given on July 13th, was The Russian Revolution. In this presentation I propose a reading of Maritegui's approach to the Russian Revolution, through the study of this brief talk. I examine this piece from three perspectives. (1) The most striking feature of Maritegui's account is the fact that he presents the Russian Revolution within a series of interconnected lectures on a variety of other historical events. Therefore, Maritegui's reading of the Revolution directly relates to his perspective about the world as a whole. The Russian Revolution constitutes for Maritegui a very relevant episode in the decline of capitalism, but it cannot be considered as the episode as it must be analyzed from a global perspective. (2) Maritegui opens his lecture by stressing his position as a speaker. Maritegui claims that he will speak, not as a philosopher or historian, but as a journalist. The reason for this is that there is a need to explain the Russian Revolution to the Latin American proletariat, so that it may become connected with this event. Therefore, despite the fact that Maritegui himself recognizes that his account will be elemental and basic, it is nonetheless necessary from a pedagogical point of view. (3) Maritegui cites Leon Trotsky as his main source. Thus, this conference on the Russian Revolution is, not only a window into the reception of this event within the Latin American context, but also a source for better understanding Maritegui's ambivalent relationship with Trotsky's thought.

## **Wayuu Contemporary Poetics and Latin American Marxism**

**Laura Lema Silva (Universit Lumire Lyon II / Institut des Amriques)**

The aim of this paper is to acknowledge that a Latin American tradition of Marxist literary criticism gives a more consolidated account of the political emancipatory power of Wayuu poetics. More generally, the paper intends to prove that this critique contributes enriching Marxist literary criticism outside Latin America. The Wayuu are an Amerindian community living in the peninsula of la Guajira, in the Caribbean frontier between Colombia and Venezuela. Strongly related to the community's oral traditions, Wayuu literary production is mostly written and in Spanish. The use of the Spanish language is a form of literary smuggling allowing the reinvention and affirmation of Wayuu ethnicity in world literary circuits. This is similar to the centrality of economic smuggling in the community's relation to capital starting in the 17th century when the peninsula was a central battlefield for imperial powers. Wayuu literature is therefore strongly tied to the community's history; it is to a certain extent the result of hybrid and connected socio-economical relations. Can Latin American Marxist literary criticism, by acknowledging the historicity of Wayuu literary production, seize the political emancipatory aspect of the community's poetical creation? Jos Carlos Maritegui's works on literature and arts were of central importance when it came to translate Marxism into Latin American realities. For Maritegui emancipation through literature is not limited to the position of a subject speaking of his or her own particular identity and social condition, it is also present inside the literary work itself: poetics are political. In similar fashion, the Puerto Rican researcher Juan Duchesne-Winter calls *comunismo literario* a critique capable of rescuing literature's capacity to create common grounds: literature is political because it is a space of poetical creation. A Marxist literary criticism could therefore fully seize the political character of Wayuu contemporary literary production by reading it beyond its representational character, that is to say the representation of a specifically Wayuu ethnic identity and by recognising the community's power of aesthetic creation.

## **Kinmaking Against Racemaking? Elisions in Resurgent Anti-natalism**

**Sophie Anne Lewis (Out of the Woods Writing Collective)**

This paper comparatively analyses the re-emergence of depopulationist discourses in both contemporary "green nationalism" (e.g. Paul Kingsnorth 2017; Marine Le Pen's centring of the environment in her 2017 election campaign) and, on the other hand, "multispecies feminism" (e.g. Haraway 2016; Haraway and Clark forthcoming) with its abandonment of marxism and call to "make kin, not babies". The former - what we at Out of the Woods have called a "vlkisch environmentalism" - differs radically from the latter in its ostensible reasons for seeking a dramatically reduced human headcount: here is climate change as a justification for overt xenophobia and racism (including anti-semitism in the trope of the 'rootless global'), versus the more-than-humanists' desire for "kinmaking" across species lines and embrace of the "tentacular" nonhuman. For example, Donna Haraway "insists", in response to my critique (Lewis 2017) that "make kin not babies is a position for anti-racist reproductive justice, including pro-child multispecies reproductive justice ...NOT a re-enlivening of misanthropy and racism" (Haraway 2017). However, I retain concerns around the deraced antinatalism in play, as well as the tacitly antimaternal elision of Black

polymaternalist histories and surrogacy-based modes of racemaking (and perhaps -unmaking) that have long queered or troubled reproduction. Finally, it is proposed that the false antithesis between the survival of more-than-human lifeworlds and humans (non-universally conceived) could be dissolved within the process of "cyborg ecological" struggle.

## **Rethinking Trans Trajectories and Historical Method: The Processes and Positionings of Pepa in Puebla**

**Vek Lewis (Senior Lecturer in Latin American Studies, University of Sydney)**

Cultural materialists, notes trans Canadian scholar, Dan Irving, generally keep their commentary limited to issues of social construction of hegemonic categories within society whether they be related to sex, gender, sexuality or otherwise (2005: 69). Concurring with Gary Kinsman (1996), he states that: this approach focuses more on the formation of dominant or official discourses and identity categories and rarely does it investigate the relation between discourses and lived historical experiences (69). Based on the field work I initiated in Puebla in 2013, in a study concerning experiences and perceptions of violence among trans populations in this Mexican city, in this talk I draw on the interview and life history conducted with one participant, a 45-year-old vestida, who lives on the industrial outskirts of a widely-recognized neoliberalized geography (Snchez Ramrez 2008). Pepa, whose life history I examine here, owns a salon which she has run for some ten years; having left street sex work, and the violence of contending actors, including the police, she has, in familial and neighborhood terms, repositioned herself in social and material ways and not just via identitarian categories and the interpellations of the category transgender or its associated politics. Indeed, this very category, and act of naming oneself as transgender, when used in reference to her life and trajectory, displays disconnect in her retelling from the cultural materialism that has informed a large body of theory and activism in the Global North; being transgender is, in her narrative, enmeshed instead in circuits of desire and repositioning, as well as moral and economic ones. Now a well-sought after hairdresser who has acquired important local recognition, the life history that emerges, I argue, requires the kind of focus suggestive of Kinsmans critique; indeed, it is one in which she, as subject, is also engaged, in the fraught negotiations of economic and moral capital (Valverde 1994) that affect and(dis)figure the lives of so many of her peers. In making this deliberation, I wish to draw on historical materialism as an important methodological and theoretical intervention in trans studies, something already initiated in Irving's and Lewis's recent (2017) co-edited special issue of *TSQ*, *Trans- Political economy*.

## **Queer Marxism and the Problem of Internationalism**

**Holly Lewis**

Jasbir Puar's concept of homonationalism voiced much-needed reservations about the project of Western queer liberalism, particularly the pinkwashing of imperialism. Others, Puar included, have asserted that the goals of queer Western politics are not necessarily relevant to people living outside the West, while still others argue that the concept of queerness is already an act of cultural imperialism that whitewashes the specificities of particular cultures. Yet by framing the conceptual inadequacies of queer politics as instances of cultural violence (even capital-backed cultural violence) our ability to understand the relationship between sexual politics and the development of capitalism in the neoliberal era

is weakened. Petrus Lius Queer Marxism in Two Chinas provides a novel Marxist approach to examining the rather murky concept of queer human rights, which requires both a concept of the universal human and a internationally coherent notion of sexual identity. Liu argues that in Marx there is never a pre-social human subject, but one universalized through the organization of labor time, and that, for this reason, Marx is queer avant la lettre, and that moreover Marxs construction of the human is intelligible without either a humanist or antihumanist framework and without the need for a culturalist ontology. The goal of this paper will be to investigate international LGBTQI phenomenon in terms of Lius analysis. Ill be using the examples Liu gives of China and Taiwan, Hector Ruvalcabas analysis of queerness in Latin America, and Ill be adding analyses of LGBTQI identity in Sub-Saharan Africa using various texts coming out of South Africa and Malawi, as well as adding my own forthcoming research in Eastern South Africa. I will also be alluding to other authors in what is perhaps becoming the queer Marxist canon Drucker, Alderson, Floyd, etc.

## **Marxist Theory, Egalitarianism and Edward Bellamy's Utopia**

**Fernando Lizarraga (Patagonian Institute of Studies on Humanities and Social Sciences (IPEHCS), National Council of Scientific and Technical Research (Conicet)-Comahue National University (UNCo), Neuquen, Argentina.)**

Within the many theoretical topics discussed in the Marxist tradition, the question of whether Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels anticipated an egalitarian society is still a pressing one. Some think they did; others starkly deny it; still others propose alternative values as desirable in the society of the freely associated producers. The utopian ring that necessarily comes up when talking of a future society reminds us also that socialism has to do with utopia, be it to embrace or reject it. So, this paper tries to make, in a nutshell, a case for equality and utopian thinking in Marxism, drawing on one of the key utopian writers of the nineteenth century, Edward Bellamy, and asserting the relevance of his works for ongoing debates on egalitarianism. Thus, when arguing that some kind of egalitarianism is needed in Marxist theory, one crucial precedent can be found in Bellamys utopian novels Looking Backward (1888) and Equality (1897). The reasons for equality given by Bellamy in whose utopian society economic equality is the basis and the natural extension of political equality- will be compared with the normative underpinnings of Marxs Needs Principle as stated in the Critique of the Gotha Programme. Some other relevant values will be singled out when comparing Marxs and Bellamys views, to wit: their rejection of natural privileges as sources of valid distributive claims -an argument that has been assumed by contemporary (liberal) egalitarians-; the underlying denial of the right-libertarian thesis self-ownership; and the importance of striking a balance between institutional change and a new egalitarian ethos.

## **Documenting the Hidden Above of (Re)Production: The Renewal of Realism in Contemporary Art**

**Kristen Lloyd (University of Edinburgh)**

In this paper I identify a significant yet overlooked tendency in contemporary art: the generation, circulation and legitimation of the 'social document'. Committed to the production of evidence and predicated on the involvement of actually existing

subjects, truth is something that this form grapples with through its embeddedness in material social realities. Its rise to prominence has been paralleled by a notable resurgence of interest in Marxian thought in general – and Marx’s *Capital* in particular – within the art field. I examine the social document in light of the legacies of *Capital*, foregrounding a shared commitment to the penetrating documentation of capitalist life and the relations of (re)production within capitalism.

Aiming to underscore the sheer mass of activity undertaken in this vein since the turn of the century, I suggest that an overview facilitates new perspectives on art’s deployment of documentary modes, not least in terms of a pervasive attendance to the new economic subjects of biopolitical globalisation and a commitment to the production of social knowledge. In 2017 it is clear that (independent) knowledge and (critical) pedagogy will be key political battlegrounds in the coming years. Does the social document have a role to play, if social knowledge predicated on realism can be seen to help formulate strategies of resistance grounded in such knowledge?

## **Agrarian Class Differentiations in Uzbekistan: Bypassing the Market Versus State Dichotomy**

**Lorena Lombardozi (SOAS, Department of Economics)**

Although we know that post-Soviet integration in the global market does not follow the standard neoliberal agricultural reforms because highly mediated by the state, nevertheless the standard reading does not explain the tensions and contradictions between the interactions with the international market as a source of foreign currency and as a market for the rising export capacity of the emerging agro-business sector. Uzbekistan is one of the world leading producer and exporter of cotton. Its agricultural policy is largely based on a state-led procurement system, grain self-sufficiency objectives and most recently on the expansion of production and processing of high-value crops. Based on primary and secondary data collected during fieldwork in 2015, this contribution puts forward a relational analysis of the patterns of agrarian class differentiation in a post-soviet country. Firstly, the paper offers a lens through which analyse agrarian class differentiation in mixed-economy systems through the example of Uzbekistan. Secondly, it extends the understanding of how global market integration is operationalized through state-led forms of agro-commercialization. Thirdly, it presents methodological reflections on the extent to which multidimensional indices can support the understanding of struggles for food and accumulation in agrarian change research. Such analysis allows us to understand the social structures and institutions that shape the patterns of accumulation and the ways in which the state and local actors exercise their power in the agro-food system. The relational lens allows us to capture the circular and process-oriented nature of food production, commodification, distribution and consumption. I argue that, in such mode of production, agencies within the state and in society are dialectically linked and organised, categories too often atomised in the literature. In particular, I contend that the access to the means of production through the cultivation of the cash-crops promoted by the state has been able to articulate polarization in the accumulation patterns and thus, agrarian class differentiation. Farmers and crops are subject to different speed and processes of commodification and commercialization, for inputs and outputs, which affect the availability and access to food and other assets. In conclusion, the social relations of production observable in post-soviet contexts offer empirical and theoretical implications for the debate on multi-linearity of pathways in capitalist development and of the state-market dichotomy. The blur modes of production prove that the predominant binary analysis needs to be challenged.



## For an Independent Revolutionary Art

### Dora Longo Bahia (Maria Isabel Longo Bahia Augusto Mestres Bahia)

In 1938, Andr Breton, the writer and founder of Surrealism, and Leon Trotsky, the Marxist revolutionary and theorist, wrote Manifesto for an Independent Revolutionary Art. The document affirms that true art, which is not content with playing variations on ready-made models, but rather insists on expressing the inner needs of man and of mankind in its time, cannot but be revolutionary and aspire to a complete and radical transformation of society if only to deliver intellectual creation from the chains that bind it and to allow all mankind to raise itself to those heights that only isolated geniuses have achieved in the past. Thirty years later, the German artist Joseph Beuys still believed art was the only truly revolutionary force that could transform society, writing in 1973 that only art is capable of dismantling the repressive effects of a senile social system stumbling towards its final days. But what does a truly revolutionary force mean in the context of capitalism, which absorbs all antagonisms and risks, in constant self-induced reorganization and thus maintaining itself as a truly revolutionary and disruptive force? Up to the middle of the last century, artists had two alternatives: either to make a game out of the requirements of their powerful patrons or to adopt a marginal, avant-garde position. The latter stance allowed them, over time, to create a critical iconography that served to demystify the precepts of material history. The situation today is quite different from a few decades ago. The cultural manifestations of the artist as outsider in the early 20th century have been taken captive, their methods of resisting rendered banal and subversion transformed into merchandise. The acceleration of the consumption cycle and the overcoming of spatial barriers has turned the production of images and sign systems, be they conventional or subversive, into ideal products for accumulating capital. Today, a frantic and futile struggle against a market that inevitably turns everything into merchandise means that every artistic novelty is born already obsolete. Even the attitudes, experiences and actions of so-called outsider artists are quickly nullified as they and their works are commoditised and marketed, or turned into empty spectacle. The simple fact of their existence renders them into marketable products on a par with traditional paintings and sculptures. How can a revolutionary position be adopted under such a system, which so greedily devours, digests and regurgitates everything for its own benefit?

## Georg Lukács's Concept of Praxis

### Daniel Lopez

Since its publication in 1923, *History and Class Consciousness* has been met with criticism. The early, Comintern-sponsored critiques penned by Abram Deborin and Laszlo Rudas initiated a "standard line" which recurs in critiques penned by associates of the Frankfurt School, the New Left journal *Telos* and contemporary theorists. Yet, there has always been another side to the story. Lukács himself replied to his critics in a *Defense of History and Class Consciousness*, refuting the charge that he maintained an idealist view of nature and a voluntarist view of the class struggle. In the early 1950s, in his essay "Western Marxism", Merleau-Ponty returned to this reading, as did Lucien Goldmann. More recently, Andrew Feenberg has led a move to partially rehabilitate Lukács's philosophy of praxis from the 1920s. This paper will examine this controversy, arguing for a totalising interpretation of Lukács's philosophy of praxis from the 1920s. This aims not only to shed light on his concept of praxis (which, in Hegelian fashion, can only be understood as both a process and a result), but to point towards the immanent limits and contradictions of this concept.

## **Gyorgy Lukacs and the Russian Revolution**

### **Michael Lowy**

In his "Theory of the Novel" (1916) - a masterpiece of Romantic Anticapitalism - Lukacs predicted - by a philosophical reading of Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky ! - that Russia would soon see "the sunrise of a new historical epoch". He received with sympathy the news of the Russian revolution, and, after overcoming some ethical restrictions, concerning the use of violence, he became one of the founders of the Hungarian Communist Party in 1918 and one of the leaders of the short-lived Hungarian Council's Republic (1919). His interpretation of Bolshevism in his early writings - such as History and Class-consciousness ( 1923) , and even more the unpublished essay Chvostimus und Dialektik (1925) - emphasized the importance of the subjective factors. This "dialectics of subjectivity" is abandoned in 1926, in his essay on Moses Hess, which celebrates Hegel's "reconciliation with reality". For Lukacs this meant the reality of Stalin's "socialism in one country"...

## **The Three Crosses**

### **David Mabb**

I will introduce and explain The Three Crosses (2017) a triptych of paintings I have made out of a Warholian grid of photocopies of Tatlins Tower/The Monument to the Third International. This grid of images has been smeared, scraped, poured and splashed with layers of varnish, bitumen and aluminium paint which, to greater or lesser extents, obscure the images of Tatlins Tower in each painting. Different shaped crosses have been cut out of each of the grid of towers and each painting has then been remounted on a white painted canvas so that a large white cross emerges from the grid of obscured towers. All three paintings have then been framed with a thin blue William Morris fabric Trellis frame. I will also be showing a series of smaller cross paintings which use the crosses cut from the triptych, which are painted with abstract expressionist smears and splashes. The paintings use contradiction to articulate a historical conflict, played out between the spiritualism of Malevich's crosses and the political instrumentalism Tatlins Monument to the Third International. They also articulate a contemporary politics where the Church, represented by the Cross, is again powerful in Russia, providing a spiritual gloss to the neoliberal gangsters who have obliterated the history of the Revolution of 1917 and the legacy of International Communism. But of course, the contradiction works both ways: the Crosses are structured, surrounded and contained by the grid of photographs of Tatlins Tower. However much these images are obscured, their multiplicity allows the ideas they stand for to be very much present.

## **On the Place of Brazilian Corruption in the Reproduction of Capitalism**

### **Amélia Coelho Rodrigues Maciel (Eudoxivnia Coelho Rodrigues Maciel e Joaquim de Souza Maciel Filho)**

The problematic of corruption is understood by common sense as a problem restricted to the individual opportunist groups or as a human nature expression. Within the current Brazilian majority left, in the face of successive corruption scandals (especially the Lava a Jato operation) involving figures of its own left, this problem is treated as a problem of electoral legislation. In the academy we found positions about the problem of Brazilian

corruption as it being the lack of hegemonic imposition by capitalist relations, as in underdeveloped countries where the primitive accumulation possibilities are a structural problem. It is necessary that the appropriation conditions be given in an economically eminent way so that it reserves a secondary role for politics. As these two initial points have already been analyzed in previous work, the present essay intends to analyze this last argument, therefore that the problem of corruption faced by Brazil stems from its late capitalist development, driven by imperialist interests. In this sense, the capitalism is not fully developed in the Brazilian economy. Then the ways of political appropriation replace the properly economic mechanism, in other words, the surplus-value, responsible for feeding the whole system. In this way, the accumulation based on mechanisms that are not purely economic - like steal, fraud, violence and state corruption - would be confined to an initial stage of the capitalism, such as Marx treats in chapter twenty-four of *The Capital*. It is also possible, such as Rosa Luxemburgo, to understand this non-purely economic form of accumulation as a process that repeats itself. She defends that the capitalism has to perpetually dispose of "non-capitalist" spaces to continue the expanded reproduction of capital. The theft, fraud, corruption and violence of the so-called primitive accumulation written by Marx, in his perspective, have to constantly repeat to keep the capital accumulation in full operation. So this work intends to analyze the accumulation by the corruption of the public money. In this way, is a non-purely economic mechanism of accumulation possible to be a phenomenon peculiar to capitalist reproduction? Taking as an example the said endemic corruption in the Brazilian peripheral economy, we can think that many of the cases are associated with urban restructuring that allows the flow of financial capital. The German Ideology will be of great importance in order to encompass the phenomenon of corruption in its economic and social aspect, starting from the material conditions of life through historicity and to highlight how these material conditions relate to cultural and political spheres. In this work Marx demonstrates that the primacy of the economic is not immediate and spontaneous but it is mediated by society and the relations of political power. In *The class struggles in France* Marx also demonstrates the interweaving between corruption and political power in capitalist society. He does this by exposing that the same greedy desire for accumulation of wealth is repeated in the political spheres of power.

## **The Look of Class: Communist Graphic Satire After 1917**

### **Grant Mandarino**

Past symbolic images indicative of twentieth-century Communism continue to resonate in present debates regarding the viability of a rejuvenated revolutionary socialist project, and none more than the vision of a historical proletariat drawn from agitprop materials produced directly by or in alignment with Soviet ideals. Often conforming to gendered and racialized norms, it is in opposition to such standard representations that radicals today stress the irreducibility of class to an identitarian logic. In the strict, Marxist sense of the term, class does not look like anything; belonging to one class or another is not the result of a person's visible stature, but rather their position within an invisible economic structure. And yet, from the very beginning, revolutionary socialists have relied upon visualizations of class to foster class consciousness and help workers to identify with the movement. Given recent predictions of the "return" of class politics, might it not be worthwhile to reassess this theoretical conundrum in light of what we have learned from practical attempts to visualize class since the Russian Revolution?

Historians of the art and visual culture of the international Communist movement continue to discover a variety of "identities" addressed in materials whose rhetorical operation complicates traditional narratives of class politics. Communist graphic satire is a particularly

cogent example of this, as it relies upon hardened identities in order to achieve ideological ends while at the same time reveling in inconsistent stereotypes. Attending to its emergence in the 1920s and development over the course of subsequent decades enables us to see beyond familiar visions of class identity and, perhaps, suggest avenues for future exploration.

## **Capitalist Agriculture and the Ecological Catastrophe of Groundwater Depletion in Punjab (India)**

**R.S. Mann (Oxford Brookes)**

At the time of independence India was dependent for food on foreign countries mainly USA. In order to get away from the humiliation faced at the hands of the US and to make the country self-sufficient in food, green revolution strategy of increasing food output was initiated in India. The state of Punjab which was blessed with fertile soils and abundant river waters was amongst the first where the green revolution strategy was implemented. Agriculture in Punjab was historically based on low external inputs but with the advent of the green revolution, the use of external inputs (fertilizers, pesticides etc) increased significantly. One of the major objectives of the green revolution was the cultivation of rice in Punjab, which was not an indigenous crop of Punjab but was a staple food item in eastern and southern India. The area under rice which in the early phase of the green revolution (the year 1966-67) was just 285 thousand hectares increased more than ten times to 2894 thousand hectares in 2014-15. The other crop under which area expanded in Punjab was wheat which historically was grown in Punjab as it was compatible with the state's ecological conditions. In 2014-15, the area under rice and wheat in Punjab was 6.56% and 11.14% of the total area under rice and wheat area in India and the production share of Punjab was 10.53% and 17.39% of the total rice and wheat produced in India respectively while Punjab has just 1.53% of geographical area of the country. The green revolution based on rice-wheat crop combination brought agricultural prosperity, though uneven between different classes of the peasantry but have lately opened the door to a catastrophe for Punjab in the form of declining groundwater table and potential ruination of the peasantry. Owing to the widespread cultivation of water guzzling rice, 110 of the total 138 administrative blocks in Punjab have been declared as overexploited, four are critical, two are semi-critical and only 22 are safe (16%). Thus, 84 per cent of these blocks are either overexploited, critical or in a semi-critical category and only 16 per cent are safe (CGWB, 2015). It is very alarming to notice also that the ground water availability for future irrigation use for Punjab is not only lowest of all the states in India; it is, in fact, negative (-14.83 billion cubic metre) as per the 2011 data. The proposed paper tries to explore how the green revolution strategy accompanied by capitalist penetration into agriculture has led to the catastrophe of groundwater depletion in Punjab, which is forecasted to become a desert in next 15 to 20 years if it does not diversify away from rice. The paper would explore alternative ecologically sound strategies for Punjab agriculture.

## **Winter in America: Gil Scott Heron, Homeland and US Politics**

**Toby Manning**

The use of Gil Scott Heron's *The Revolution Will Not be Televised* in US television drama *Homeland*'s sixth season credits in 2017 was a timely reminder of how adroitly conscious soul singer, Scott Heron, mapped the modern political terrain back in the mid 70s. This

paper will ask, firstly, what such radical sentiments were doing in a liberal hawk War on Terror drama like *Homeland*; then it will trace the career, then influence of Scott Heron. *Winter in America* was Scott Heron's designation for the neoliberal political climate, back at its 70s dawn, and seems especially apposite now. His work poetic, witty and caustic is as relevant today as it was in the 70s essaying a black radicalism which emphasized class as much as race; regularly focusing on the decimating impact of drugs on deprived communities; excoriating the ideological role of the media; and dissecting the corruption and venality of the political class. While his career ended in shame and premature death, the legacy of Scott Heron has been vast, both in terms of his oeuvre and its influence, and the paper will briefly trace how hip hop artists have both channelled and distorted his radical message. Toby Mannings books include *Pink Floyd (Rough Guides/Penguin, 2006)*, *John le Carr and the Cold War (Bloomsbury 2017)* and a chapter in *David Pattie and Sean Albiez's The Velvet Underground (Bloomsbury 2018)*. He has taught at Birmingham, Brunel and City Lit, London.

## **'Architecture or Revolution', the Brazilian Way**

**Luiz Renato Martins (University of So Paulo), Ana Paula Pacheco (University of So Paulo)**

The spirit that breathes over Brasilia is the spirit of utopia, the spirit of the plan. Despite sounding misplaced and absurd now, these words came from the most acute Brazilian art critic of his time (Mrio Pedrosa, *Braslia, a cidade nova [1959]*), also a former trotskyst militant. They remain exemplary of many sectors of Brazilian Lefts illusions that true social reforms could be triggered by governmental planning towards industrialisation, pushed by an enlightened wing of the bourgeoisie, heading a class-alliance coalition. Braslias project acquired a crucial modernising role in such historical setting. Conversely, the panel seeks to demonstrate how Braslia played a decisive role as a counter-revolution tool in a context increasingly dangerous for bourgeois rulership, threatened by the Cuban Revolution. Besides, the counter-reading of original Brasilias urbanistic-architectonical achievements, the panel also targets at its after-effects nowadays inducing urban apartheid and social segregation. In the striking Adirley Queirs film *White Out, Black Stay (2014)*, peripheral voices take the floor, controlling technical resources (cameras and sound equipments), the plot and its setting, in a newly crude picture of Brasilias neighbourhood, the so-called satellite-towns. Two Blacks, mutilated survivors after a racist massacre of a funk party by the military police in 1986, interact with a character coming from the future (2070) to make a documentary on nowadays. By combining newsreel and science fiction, in order to focus after-effects mingling absurd and reality, the film scrutinizes the memory of the massacre, disclosing the truth of a modernization against the poor. Thus, such subjects, amputated and worn out by the progress, became narrators of their own history. The appearing of satellite perspectives through the undoing of current film form achieves a breakthrough documentary on Brazilian modernization. By such means a new historical imagination seizes the social totality of an exterminating process, revealing global capitalist effects through out eyes and bodies coming out of the periphery.

In addition to two presentations, the panel will exhibit *Free-form (2013, 714)*, a video by artist Clara Ianni about the slaughter in 1959 of a workers strike in Braslias working site.

## **Art Meets Capital**

**Stewart Martin (Middlesex)**

The threshold of art today is inscribed as never before with words from Marx's Capital. This is the scene of intense controversies, some entrenched, some scrabbling; controversies over the subsumption of art by capital, indeed, over the very nature of subsumption and art and capital. This paper will attempt to sketch out this drama, its characters, acts and conflicts, and try to enable a comprehension of what is being done and what is to be done.

## **Horizontalism, Popular Assemblies, and Imagining a Democratic Transition to Socialism in the 21st Century?**

**Sarah Mason (PhD Student, UC Santa Cruz)**

The basic question of every revolution is that of state power. Unless this question is understood, there can be no intelligent participation in the revolution, not to speak of guidance of the revolution. -V.I Lenin, April 1917 People are building new mechanisms of community power. The state isn't going to be the one to stop that violence coming to us; we are the ones that will be able to stop it. -David Abud, regional organizer from the National Day Laborer Organizing Network, March 2017 Over the last several decades, the representative institutions of capitalist democracy have faced a crisis of legitimacy. Voter turnout, new voter registration, and overall trust in government has fallen to historic lows. While participation in formal democratic processes has declined, global protest movements against the political and capitalist class have exploded: Argentina, Tahrir Square, Occupy, Greece, Spain, and Gezi Park. These movements have largely embraced a critique of representational democracy, preferring mass horizontal assemblies for building and exercising popular power. Critically engaging the work of Marina Sitrin and Dario Azzellini, my presentation will explore the ways in which these new forms of social and political organization have successfully and unsuccessfully resisted the policies and economic imperatives of the 1%. At the center of my presentation are the following questions: can the popular assembly form mount a formidable challenge to the state and capital? Why have recent global protest movements virtually abandoned the question of state power? And, in what ways does the legacy of the Russian Revolution shape our willingness to engage the state as a terrain of struggle?

## **'Everyone who is here is from here' – Rethinking political subjectivities within, beyond and against the Juridical Definitions of the Citizenship, in the centennial of the Russian Revolution**

**Anastasia Matsouka (University of Athens),  
Konstantinos Gousis (Roehampton University)**

This paper argues that the current refugee movement consists a critical conjuncture that poses the challenge to rethink political subjectivity and dominant juridical definitions of citizenship. Drawing on the Marxist critique of the bourgeois society and the individual

homme/citizen division, we address the various exclusions as juxtaposed with inclusive alternative historical/juridical paradigms based on the revolutionary experiences of the 20th century. In the broader context of modernity, political identities emerge and establish from top to bottom: through the submission to the fundamental constitutional rules of the state, and the exclusionary definitions of citizenship and the following rights granted and guaranteed by the state. However, in the first Soviet Constitution (1918) after the October Revolution, this one-way definition has been questioned and the Soviet Republic has recognized the right of the local Soviets to grant citizenship without any further complicated formality, to those foreigners who live in the territory of the Republic, and belong to the working class and the exploited strata.

The fundamental differences between the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen (1789) and the Declaration of the Rights of the Working and Exploited People (1918), which formed the basis of the Soviet Constitution, have various political, legal and philosophical implications. This paper addresses the so-called 'immigrant question' focusing on the formation of political identities seeking possibilities and limits of the constitutional/juridical terrain and acts of citizenship 'from below', beyond and usually against the existing exclusionary and repressive politics. Within this framework, we address the contemporary Greek case regarding migration as a paradigm of constructing political subjectivities from below. We examine solidarity practices, occupations and movements not as abstract humanitarianism to protect victims unable to act for themselves. Instead, putting emphasis on refugees' self-organization and participation in movements, we will argue that common struggles and experiments of political co-existence constitute a 'project under construction' of a new inclusive alliance of the working and exploited people which is the basis of any emancipatory project of the future.

## What Revolution in the Context of Capital?

**Marcelo Badaro Mattos (Universidade Federal Fluminense - Brazil)**

In a very interesting article, Colin Barker takes up the idea of the social movement in general expressed by Marx, who does not define "social movement" as a singular social or political protest, but as a general tendency of the struggles at certain historical periods. In his words: the social movement was a summary term for the various forms and manifestations of popular challenge to ongoing capitalist development (Barker, 2014, 9) In Capital volume one, Marx uses the word revolution almost fifty times. When Marx explain absolute and relative surplus-value the term appears many times, almost always referring to the "Industrial Revolution; in the discussion on the general law, the word appears again several times, associated with "agrarian revolution," or the "technical revolution" in the production process; finally, in the discussion on primitive accumulation there are several references to the previous senses, but we can also see mentioned the revolutions carried out by the bourgeoisie (English and French) and, in Chapter 32 (English editions), the famous passage on the potential proletarian revolution (the term is not explicitly mentioned): Along with the constant decrease in the number of capitalist magnates, who usurp and monopolize all the advantages of this process of transformation, the mass of misery, oppression, slavery, degradation and exploitation grows; but with this there also grows the revolt of the working class (). The knell of capitalist private property sounds. The expropriators are expropriated. (Marx, 1990, 929) Within the book this seems to be the most explicit reference to the proletarian revolution, for which Marx had been fighting for more than two decades. The revolution as potentially contained in the social contradictions generated by the accumulation of capital, the negation of the negation," as he would say a few lines later. In the Preface, however, Marx would make a more localized record in the concrete history of

his time that supported his bet on the proletarian revolution. A record that highlights the relationship between the struggles for the liberation of the enslaved workers and the search for the emancipation of the proletariat, both fundamental parts of the "social movement in general: Just as in the eighteenth century the American War of Independence sounded the tocsin for the European middle class, so in the nineteenth century the American Civil War did the same for the European working class. (Marx, 1990, 91) This paper aims to explore Marx's discussions on American Civil War and slavery abolition as well as his role in the International Workingmen's Association - which had done many statements in favor of slavery abolition - as important elements to understand the context (the movement" as a whole) in which he finished to write the first volume of *Capital*. References BARKER, Colin, O movimento como um todo: ondas e crises, Revista Outubro, n. 22, 2014. MARX, Karl, *Capital. A Critique of Political Economy*, volume 1, London, Penguin, 1990.

## The Transcendental Power of Capital: On Value and Class

Søren Mau (University of Southern Denmark)

The concept of transcendental power appears only twice in Marx's writings: once in the *Grundrisse*, and once in Marx's own index to the notebooks that make up the *Grundrisse*. In this paper I will argue that this concept can provide a useful way of understanding the specific form of power characteristic of capital, that is, the way in which the self-valorisation of value dominates social life in capitalist society. Marx famously claims that capitalist relations of production rely on an impersonal and economic mode of domination a silent compulsion reproduced through invisible threads. I will argue that this aspect of capitalist power is the result of the transcendental nature of the power of capital transcendental in the sense that capital is a process and a social relation structuring the conditions of possibility of social reproduction. Capital's stranglehold on social reproduction in capitalist society is grounded in its ability to regulate and mediate the connection between life and its conditions, or, in other words, its ability to master the transition from possibility to actuality. I will contrast the concept of transcendental power with the tendency to understand the power of capital as either a transcendent or an immanent form of power. In the former, capital is understood as a parasitical logic dominating social reproduction from the outside, comparable to a vampire living off a pre-existing organism an unfortunate metaphor also employed by Marx himself. In the immanent conception of power, capital as a universal structuring totality disappears in a nominalist preoccupation with concrete everyday praxis. The consequence is that the capital relation, understood as a class relation on the level of the capitalist totality, can only be understood as an emergent property, i.e. as a cumulative result of a multiplicity of individual processes. But as Marx repeatedly underlines, the capital relation should be understood not only as the result of the circuit of capital, but also as its presupposition. In order to understand this double nature of the capital relation and the way in which capital posits its own presuppositions, we have to understand the transcendental dimension of the power of capital. The transcendental power of capital is premised on what Marx refers to as the bodily organisation of the human being. On the one hand, humans are dependent upon tools to such a high degree that Marx refers to the tools as organs, i.e. as parts of the human body. On the other hand, compared to other organs, tools are fairly easy to separate from the rest of the body, and this means that in human beings, life can be separated from its conditions to a higher degree than in other animals. This bodily organisation is what makes it possible for the human species to organise its reproduction in so many different ways, and what makes it possible for capital to insert its self-valorising movement in the gap between life and its conditions.



# **The Struggle for Women's Liberation in Ireland: 1916 to Today**

**Maev Mcdaid (PhD Candidate, University of Sheffield)**

The last year has seen a rise in participation in social movements across Ireland including the Strike for Repeal and Strike for Choice campaigns, which have brought demands for reproductive rights to the fore in Ireland. This paper looks at the origins of the women's struggle in Ireland and connects it to today's campaigning. Taking a historical starting point of the revolutionary period between 1913-1923, this paper particularly considers the 1916 Easter Rising, which is often viewed as the pivotal moment this decade. There is no doubt the Easter Rising had a profound impact on Irish politics, but also particularly for Irish women who were galvanized by their new found role at the heart of struggle. However, the Easter Rising was not successful, leading to a wave of imperialist reaction. Revisiting this experience provides a new angle on the analysis today, focusing on the specific experiences of women in Ireland. This paper will discuss the role of women in popular working class militancy, the role of imperialism and the Catholic state, and the continuing impact of these on struggle today. From Eva-Gore Booth to the modern day abortion rights movement, the legacy of the revolutionary period is felt today across Britain and Ireland and its potential yet to be seen. To update the writing of Padraig Pearse, this paper will argue that an Ireland with its women unfree, shall never be at peace.

# **The Relevance of the Central Obrera Boliviana today: The Labour Bureaucracy and MAS Labour Officialdom**

**Angus McNelly (Queen Mary University of London)**

For more than 30 years during the National Revolutionary state, between 1952 and 1985, the Central Obrera Boliviana (Bolivian Workers Central, the COB) was an integral part of Bolivian society and nation. Dominated by the miners, the radical section of Bolivian society at the time, the COB headed struggles against the military dictatorships between 1964 and 1982, leading the fights for democracy during the period between the end of Banzer's dictatorship in 1978 and start of the democratically elected governments in 1982. The start of the neoliberal period with Supreme Decree 21060 in 1985 marked the decline of the influence exerted by the COB in Bolivian society. However, it did not disappear entirely, and it has regained a visible position in Bolivian society under Evo Morales. The COB remains a prominent social organisation in Bolivia, although it has been severely understudied both in the Anglophone and Hispanophone literature. Many political commentators assume the COBs insignificance today, in part because it has never recovered the power it once had. That is not to say, however, that it is irrelevant. In this paper I seek to address the current lacuna in the literature and analyse the COB under the Movement Towards Socialism (MAS) regime from 2006 to today. By distinguishing between labour bureaucracy and labour officialdom I seek to explore how the leadership of the COB has become assimilated into the political project of the MAS, debilitating the organisations ability to represent its bases. The class structure of the country remains largely unchanged and the hydrocarbons windfall has failed to produce forward and backward linkages with the economy and, importantly, waged jobs. The majority of the working-classes remain in informalised forms of work and face increasing precarity, despite a supposedly left-wing government. The leadership of COB continues to be wedded to the political programme of the MAS. Moreover, many sectors of the waged working-classes are reliant on government

handouts for their survival, making the COB a visible political player but an impotent counterbalance to anti-worker legislation and the continuation of neoliberal political economy in Bolivia.

## The Role of Sexual Revolutions in the Films of Zheleimir Zhilnik

Matthias Meindi (Zurich University)

Zheleimir Zhilnik made his breakthrough in European Film with *Rani Radovi* (Early Works, 1969), one of the most provocative films of the so-called Black Wave Cinema which anticipated and accompanied the social criticism of the Yugoslav protest movement of 1968. In *Early Works* a group of young people, led by the beautiful Yugoslava and enthused by Marx's 1844 manuscripts (which are read from the off) set out to the countryside to revive the struggle for a socialist society. Alongside the film tells the story of a (failing) attempt for sexual liberation a dimension of the film, which has though hardly ignorable never been analyzed thoroughly within the histories of sexual ethics and sex in cinema. Since then, Zhilnik has in his growing oeuvre repeatedly come back to the subjects of sex and gender against the background of the transitional and catastrophic history of (former) Yugoslavia. In his TV-feature film *Brooklyn Gusinje* (1988) young Ivana jumps at her chance to flee from her traditionalist background in the Albanian countryside as she falls in love with a Serbian emigrant to the US. But in the end it seems unclear what liable alternative to her unfulfilling former life her liberator is ready and able to offer really. In *Marble Ass* (1995) Zhilnik tells the surreal tale of Merlin, a transsexual prostitute giving shelter to aggressive soldier-home-comers. In the last part of the *Kennedy-Trilogy*, *Kenedi se eni* (Kennedy is getting married, 2007), Zhilnik gives up documentary style to construe the story of a young man who makes an attempt to overcome the Fortress Europe by experimenting with his sexuality and marrying a gay German man. Zhilnik's criticism of society is certainly rooted in Marxism and the Yugoslav Protest Movement of 1968. My talk will critically engage with this outlook, asking the question, what relation there is between the sexual revolutions in Zhilnik's films and his broader criticism of society, i.e. if they do justice to the eigenvalue of the (neo-)sexual revolutions.

## Inequality

Pedro Mendes Louiero

Shaikh's analysis of income inequality (Shaikh, Papanikolaou and Wiener, 2014, Shaikh 2016, 2017) draws from the Econophysics research agenda to formulate a set of simple, powerful laws. According to the author, wage inequality is turbulently equalised at a Gini of 0.5, not only in the overall distribution of wages but also within occupations and within gender and racial groups. This paper takes stock of Shaikh's theories of inequality both theoretically and empirically, and finds it lacking in the two aspects. Theoretically, there are no adequate explanations of why such alleged patterns would hold, particularly regarding occupational, gender and racial aspects. Furthermore, the predictions are internally inconsistent, as a within-groups Gini of 0.5 is incompatible with an overall Gini of 0.5, given that there are significant income gaps between groups. Empirically, data for Brazil show that there is no discernible tendency for a turbulent equalisation of wages around 0.5. The conclusions point towards the need of adopting a much more encompassing theory for wage distribution.

## **Women in the Revolutionary Party and Process - Class/Gender Debates and Implications for Strategy**

**Rupi Minhas (York University)**

This paper begins with the question of women in the revolutionary party. It does this in two ways: first, by taking a snippet from the debates on the race/gender/class 'trilogy' (Gimenez 2001) and drawing out their lessons for communist movements, as well as the how these debates stand to be enriched by concrete experiences (historical or present) of practical emancipatory politics in the socialist/communist vein. In doing so, I will attempt to provide a philosophically informed account of how to approach the question of women in the revolutionary party and process that eschews questions about the primacy of class, or the relegation of women to 'the woman question'. Second, it examines concrete situations by first drawing on the literature on the Bolshevik party and the role of women therein (Marik 2009; Clements 1997) as well as contemporary movements that call themselves communist (in the Indian case). I argue that a failure to adequately address the woman question (including a lack of reconceptualizing the woman's question), forms a key part of the weakness of the Indian communist movement, and this is reflected in and through various aspects of the movement. The paper concludes with a commentary on how this question relates to broader issues of revolutionary strategy and theory, and the need to cast 'the woman question' in a new light.

## **Lukacs Leninism or Revolutionary Realpolitik as a Way out of the Grand Hotel Abyss and the Left TINA Trap**

**Alexander Minotakis (PhD candidate, University of  
Athens, Department of Communication and Media  
Studies)**

Lukacs used to say in his criticism of western left intelligentsia that they have taken up residence in the Grand Hotel Abyss, a beautiful hotel, equipped with every comfort, on the edge of an abyss, of nothingness, of absurdity. And the daily contemplation of the abyss between excellent meals or artistic entertainments can only heighten the enjoyment of the subtle comforts offered. Today, a large part of an older generation of the left intelligentsia seem to follow this trend completely disengaged from class struggle and any kind of political formations. Even worse, another part was willing to participate in so-called left governments ending at the end of the day implementing or justifying austerity, memoranda and imperialism. In this paper, it will be argued that 100 years after the October revolution we should return to Lukacs reading of Lenin both during the 20s and the 60s and especially: a) the way he utilizes the concept Augenblick in order to seize the revolutionary moment and the role of the leadership in the revolutionary situation and b) the Revolutionary Realpolitik as a new relationship between direct political tactics and the communist strategy.

## **Beyond the Gendered Division of Labour: Revisiting Third Space Feminism**

**Magally A. Miranda-Alcazar (Viewpoint Magazine, International Women's Strike, Red Bloom, UCLA Chicana/o Studies)**

How do we actually transform the gendered division of labor? By popularizing the social reproduction strike, a renewed working class feminist movement that emerged around the International Womens Strike has put forth several theoretical and tactical proposals for ameliorating the burdens of paid and unpaid social reproduction unduly placed on women: for example, valorizing care work as work, challenging male chauvinism through encouraging volunteerism by male comrades for the work of social reproduction during a strike. But few feminist movements, even in militant working-class or insurrectionary contexts, have not been able to actually break down the gendered division of labor. At best they have de-stigmatized (see: Esther Cooper Jackson) or collectivized the labor of social reproduction that is still largely done by women or organized and led womens brigades or auxiliaries specializing in tactics like smuggling goods and sharing information. None of these in and of themselves have been capable of breaking down the gendered division of labor, either de-naturalizing or de-gendering production and social reproduction. Taken together, however, these various tactics represent attempts to attack and transform the gendered division of labor in different ways. They represent the arsenal available for imagining and implementing a communist horizon. This paper will explore several theoretical discussions and tactical considerations about the nature of gender and divisions of labor in revolutionary, insurrectionary and nationalist contexts and liberation movements. Zeroing in on Italian autonomous feminism, canonized in part due to the brilliant writing of scholars like Maria Rosa Dalla Costa and Silvia Federici, this paper will move into less theorized territory to explore North American third space feminism, a term coined by Chicana theorists like Emma Perez to describe the ways in which feminist demands have been articulated within revolutionary and liberation movements in the American Southwest. North American third space feminism would require revisiting womens participation as both accessories and revolutionaries in their own right within the US-Mexico based Partido Liberal Mexicano (PLM), one of the most significant internationalist projects to come out of the Southwest in the 20th Century. It would necessarily trace that legacy through the latter part of the 20th Century where it against shows up through the work of Ana Nieto-Gomez, founder of the Hijos de Cuauhtemoc, a militant Chicana working class organization in Southern California. This paper will explore the ways in which these moments have create openings for de-naturalizing and de-gendering the divide between production and social reproduction in theory and practice. My name is Magally Miranda Alcazar. At the time of the conference, I will be a first year PhD student in Chicano/a Studies at UCLA. My research interests include Marxist Feminist critical theory and Chicana Studies. I belong to the editorial collective of Viewpoint Magazine. Earlier this year, I was a participant in the HM New York closing plenary alongside Tithi Battacharya, Cinzia Arruzza and Nancy Fraser. I am an active organizer in the International Womens Strike committee and a member of the New York-based communist collective, Red Bloom.

## **Struggle or Starve Book Event**

**Sean Mitchell (Author, Struggle or Starve, 2017, Haymarket Books)**

Struggle or Starve: Working-Class Unity in Belfast's 1932 Outdoor Relief Riot by Sean Mitchell

One could be forgiven for assuming that deep and bitter sectarian divisions are an immutable and permanent facet of life in Belfast. The subject of this book, at first glance, would appear to be a confirmation of this. After all, the centrepiece of this work is a riot: one that involved all the usual violence, stone throwing and armed response from the state. A riot that involved Catholics and Protestants, barricades at interface areas, attacks on persons and property, even guns and murder. The riots of 1932, as we shall see however, were of a very different kind to those that the media is used to broadcasting across the globe. The backdrop of the story is familiar one, and of a piece with events elsewhere around the world during the same period: poverty, hunger, unemployment and a cruel and unforgiving government administration drove working people to a sharp break with tradition. The historical context was the Great Depression of the 1930s. Like many parts of the globe, the Northern Ireland economy had been decimated by the consequences of the Wall Street Crash. Thousands of Catholic and Protestant workers alike faced a future on the bread line. Those out of work were forced to sign on for Outdoor Relief (ODR), where they would work on labour schemes and receive a bare pittance in return. As the unemployment rate skyrocketed to 40% in 1932, the failure of the Unionist government to alleviate the plight of the unemployed was causing serious consternation across the working class. It was here that a relatively small and previously uninfluential organization of communists grouped around the Revolutionary Workers Groups (RWGs) entered the fray. The communists formed an unemployment committee that unionised those on the ODR scheme and provided a focal point for the wider layers of unemployed workers, both Catholic and Protestant, to become organised. Driven by an unmatched audacity and an unyielding fortitude, the committee organised mass demonstrations of the unemployed numbering in excess of 60,000 across the city. A strike of the ODR workers themselves was organised, only to incur the wrath of a hostile and unappreciative Unionist administration, who decided to revert to type and crush the movement with force. The plan backfired and the ODR riots were born.

## **Reproductive Unrest: Neoliberalism and Social Unrest in (post)-Crisis Europe**

### **Madelaine Moore**

In recent years, EU member states have faced economic, political and institutional crises, and different actors have used the banner of the crisis to push forward a new form of neoliberal authoritarianism through attacks on social reproduction and the wind back of the welfare state. This has created political instability and space for social movements to push back. However, most studies of the crisis have tended to take a top-down approach exploring the question of how certain fractions of capital have maintained their hegemony and deepened their grip, ignoring the challenges to these processes through collective action and the impact these social movements have had. Conversely there are those who solely look at social movements, and in turn fail to explore their relation to the social whole - they lack a theory of capital. The neoliberal state is a particular power formation which in turn provokes certain protest dynamics and claims. Its intrusion and attack on areas of social reproduction have resulted in unprecedented struggles, as well as problematized certain theoretical categories such as what we mean by “public/private or common”. We explore this through a case study concerning the right to water protests in Ireland during the last five years which offers different perspective on these dynamics.

## **Calais: Border, Labour, Life**

**Roberto Mozzachiodi (Goldsmiths College)**

On June 23rd 2015 ferry workers involved in the Syndicat Maritime Nord strike action against the sale of MyFerryLink Channel ferry service blocked the Eurotunnel rail entrance causing a day long shutdown of transport links between France and the U.K. This event would become better remembered in the British public imaginary as precisely the moment when the situation regarding the migrant population camped out near Calais went from being a problem to a crisis. Images of migrants attempting to board freight trucks taking advantage of the strike action were recycled to varying political ends throughout the lead up to the Brexit referendum, while the event itself gave David Cameron occasion to describe the migrant population as a swarm. Meanwhile logistics lobby groups such as the Freight Transport Association (FTA) and the Road Haulage Association (RHA) became prime movers in the consultation process over subsequent policy implementation, with the loss of profits caused by delays taking sole priority over the status of migrant lives. Looking at the literature coming from these lobby groups during the events of June 2015 up to the forced dispersion of the jungle in October 2016, it is apparent that there was an intentional blurring of which actors were within the jurisdiction of border control with calls for Calais to be as much a strike free zone as it was to be a migrant free zone. This paper takes the events of the 23rd, the subsequent Anglo-French interventions in and politicking of the situation in Calais, and the priority given to commercial stakeholders in shaping the security infrastructure of the Calais border as a way of linking the specificities of this border to a more general turn in neoliberal governmentality toward a mode of operation working at the nexus of supply chain capitalism and post-industrial nation re-building. In particular this paper is concerned with the confluence of labour discipline and biopolitical immunity enshrined in technologies and governmental architectures of security which are becoming an increasingly ubiquitous feature of borders. It reads the standardisation of such technologies and architectures of border security as among other determinations a symptom of the high stakes imperatives of just-in-time supply chain management. With the La Touquet Agreement for juxtaposed borders recently put into question by Emmanuel Macron after his election victory, this paper will surmise about the role the evolution of the Calais border will play in post-Brexit nation-building?

## **Combined and Uneven Development: A Roundtable on Theorizing World-Literature**

**Pablo Mukherjee (University of Warwick), Nicholas Lawrence (University of Warwick), Sharae Deckard (Assistant Professor in World Literature, School of English, Drama and Film Studies, University College Dublin), Daniel Hartley**

In *Combined and Uneven Development: Towards a New Theory of World-Literature* (2015) the Warwick Research Collective argues that the onset of world-literature, the literature of the modern world-system, coincides with the worlding of capital as that systems guiding principle. We date this to the global extension of capitalist relations via European colonialism from the late C18 on: If we follow Wallerstein and others in speaking of the instantiation of capitalism as a world-system around 1500, it nevertheless seems clear that it is only in the long nineteenth century, and then as the direct result of British and European colonialism, that we can speak both of the capitalisation of the world and of the full worlding of capital. World-literature would then presumably be understood as a development of the past 200 years, though its formal conditions of possibility would have

begun to be established some three centuries earlier. (15) In periodising world-literature this way, we duly note the familiar way stations of Goethe's Weltliteratur and Marx and Engels's welcoming of a supra-national literary regime corresponding to the capitalist world market imposed by bourgeois economic relations. Against the grain of much comparativist and postcolonial theory, however, these markers for us serve as portals for a conceptualization that stresses systematicity and interrelatedness as key features of the modern world-literary system, one whose dynamic both registers and embodies the combined and uneven development of the world-system of which it is a part. This roundtable allows us to revisit the terms of our proposed periodization and its theoretical terms. We invite further discussion of terms specific to our account, including our invocation of registration, semi-periphery and (peripheral) modernism. We wish to consider the question of world-literature in its disciplinary specificity, but also in its links to discourses of combined and uneven development within other disciplines (political theory, art history, musicology, etc.). At the same time, during this commemorative year of revolutionary hopes and betrayals, we aim to press harder on the question of reading crisis and culture in the world-system at large. If the continuing social, economic, political and ecological upheaval since 2008 reflects an epochal crisis of the kind that brought capitalism on to the world stage, it is in theory possible to read evidence of this shift in the world-literature of today.

## **Student Revolt, Generational Cleavage, and the Corbyn Project**

**Matt Myers (University of Oxford)**

Since the vast expansion of higher education in the 1960s, student movements have been a central pillar of social movements and a key priority for left-wing political organising. Once merely the finishing schools of the children of the British establishment – with undergraduates acting as pools of strike breakers during the General Strike of 1926 – universities now often breed a political radicalism and collectivity. From May '68 to Mexico City, the West German and American SDS to the Japanese Zengakuren movement, student struggles have shaken ruling classes across the world. Students and their movements provoked fierce debate on the left on their significance, their relationship to class politics (and students' position in the class structure), and their relation to the wider struggle for socialism. The 2010s have also been a decade of intense student-led uprisings. Beginning in the UK in 2010, a line can be threaded through the Chilean student movement of 2011, the huge student strike in Quebec in 2012, the 2015 South African Rhodes Must Fall uprisings, and the Indian student movement erupting at JNU in 2016. Debt, precarity, colonialism, and the rise of the far-right have spurred on movements that have seriously challenged states and ruling classes – even if some have proved ephemeral. However, the literature on student movements (especially by Marxists) past and present is comparatively small, given the scale and impact of these movements. Where once the left pronounced students as the new 'vanguard', student movements today are seen as but another 'social movement' like any other. Given the vast changes wrought to education and the university by neoliberalism, there is a renewed need to theorise the place of students within political conflict, and to conceptualise how student struggle might relate to a wider struggle against capital. My paper will seek to explore these issues, applying a historical and reflective theoretical approach to the participants' experiences of organising within the UK student movement over the course of this decade. My paper will seek to elucidate the impact neoliberalism has had on students' subjectivities and their relation to struggle, and the construction of new and radical political subjects seen in the recent 'surge' of young people into support for Jeremy Corbyn's Labour Party.

# **Black Marxism and the Colonial World in Daniel Gurins Political Thought**

**Selim Nadi (Sciences Po Paris/Universitt Bielefed)**

This paper aims at studying the central role of racial antagonisms in Daniel Gurins political thought. Indeed, if Gurin is widely known as an anti-colonial and anti-racist activist who discovered the brutality of French colonialism during his stay in Lebanon and in Indochina he is widely underestimated as a political theorist on those issues. Hence, this paper aims at retracing Gurins evolution on these questions, from his articles in *Le Cri du peuple* to his support of the Algerian revolution, through his stay in the United States, Gurin was in contact with the most important anticolonial and antiracist revolutionaries and theoreticians from the 20th Century. Thus we will look both at his theoretic and strategic views on colonialism and racism including the link between both phenomenon and their close relationship to capitalism in Gurins political thought. While today it is widely known that a lot of theorists from the French Left are often stuck in a rut when they have to deal with the racial contradictions of capitalism, Gurin is a good example of a French Marxist theorist who understood race question's centrality within capitalist social relationships. Thus, this paper aims at tracing a kind of genealogy of Gurins relation to the issue of Racism-Colonialism and especially the way it cast a new light on Gurins relation to Marxism and to Anarchism. This is why we will not only focus on Gurins biographical aspects but rather try to explain how his experience from Racism and Colonialism has participated to the solidification of his anticolonial political theory but also of a political strategical reflexion putting the fight against Racism-Colonialism in the centre of the more global fight for emancipation. Focusing also on Gurins influence not only French anticolonial thinker like Csaire and Fanon but also US Black Marxism like C.L.R. James or W.E.B. Du Bois.

# **The Old is Dying and the New Cannot be Born - Now is the Time to Organize**

**Sarah Nagel (Die Linke) and Christina Kaindl**

The election of Trump and the rise of rightwing populist parties and movements across Europe have spurred a debate about whether the left is still able and willing to speak to the working class. We argue that the study of both Marx and Gramsci can inform strategies of left parties to organize for progressive change today and win over those whose lives have been buffeted by over 20 years of neoliberal politics. Instead of painting a picture of workers that is either romanticized, paternalistic or otherwise inaccurate, we need to analyze closely how the working class has changed and who our potential allies are. In Germany, this means to acknowledge that women and migrants, part-time workers and the working poor make up a bigger share than in the 1970s and they are more likely to strike and protest than those employed in the industrial sector. Left parties need to offer workers and the unemployed a political alternative that is not only electoral but activist. There has been much talk about the disappointed in de-industrialized areas who vote for right-wing parties and candidates. While there is certainly an economic base to those electoral decisions (although many of those who have had it with neoliberal politics decide not to vote at all), it is not the only factor and we should refrain from oversimplifying causes and effects in the discussion. Instead, we must enter what Gramsci called the war of position: A struggle for hegemony in the political arena, in culture, media, the workplace and everyday life. As many of the spaces where solidarity and political consciousness could once be created have been eradicated and experiences in the workforce are increasingly differentiated, neighborhoods can be a good starting point to do so. We will draw upon experiences of



DIE LINKE in Germany to propose a few ideas which we think are suitable to begin to tackle these challenges, and would like to further discuss them with participants.

## **Fascism and the Crisis of Hegemony**

**Robert Narai (The University of Melbourne)**

Faced with the rise of fascism during the upheavals that followed the end of the First World War, Marxists were compelled to produce new analyses that could both understand and defeat this dangerous form of mass reaction. At the outset, however, many assumed that fascism could not provide any lasting danger. Antonio Gramsci was one of the few figures within the Italian Communist movement to argue against such complacency. Writing in *L'Ordine Nuovo* during the upheaval of May 1920, he described the danger as follows: The present phase of the class struggle in Italy is the phase that precedes either the conquest of power by the revolutionary proletariat ... or a tremendous reaction by the capitalists and the governing caste. Every kind of violence will be used to subjugate the agricultural and industrial working class. This paper will critically reconstruct Gramsci's theory of fascism through the numerous modifications it underwent from 1920 onwards: in response to the upheavals of 1920-21; the defeat of these upheavals and the subsequent seizure of power by Mussolini in 1922; the critical absorption of the lessons of the Thesis on Comintern Tactics of 1922; and the political experience of the Italian Communist party and fascist rule during and after this period. It will be argued that a critical reconstruction of Gramsci's 'mature' theory of fascism - conceived here as a particular response to a crisis of hegemony - can provide Marxists with insights into understanding and ultimately defeating the resurgence of fascism today.

## **Marx the Eurocentrist? Capital Volume 1 and the So-Called English Road**

**Chris Newlove (Kingston University)**

In the *Revolution against Capital* Gramsci portrays Capital as the textbook of the English road to development in which all countries must pass through the same processes as England to create the material foundations for communism. Marx rejects this interpretation of Capital in his letters (and draft letters) on the Russian Commune. Rather than being a retrospective shift, these letters should be seen as a continuation of themes already present in Capital volume 1. Specifically, the differential processes of the separation of the producer from the means of production from country to country, primitive accumulation as not only the enclosures but also colonialism and public debt, and finally the possibility of de-proletarianisation. England is presented simultaneously as the classic example of the laws of motion of capitalism and an anomaly. Confusion on this question is largely created by Marx's attempt to argue for the relevance to the German reader of a book that primarily takes England as its main focus in the first preface to Capital volume 1.

## **DuBois's Marxist Mentor: Will Herberg and the Making of Black Reconstruction in America**

**Matt Nichter (Rollins College, USA)**

W.E.B. DuBois's *Black Reconstruction* is widely recognized as a masterpiece of historical reinterpretation, its idiosyncratic application of Marxist concepts the subject of extensive debate. This talk identifies a key intellectual influence on DuBois that previous scholarship has overlooked. I demonstrate that Will Herberg, a leading figure in the Lovestoneite wing of the socialist movement, drew DuBois's attention to Marx and Engels' writings on the Civil War and Reconstruction; sketched a historical materialist analysis of the period that influenced DuBois's own interpretation; and inspired the psychological wage formulation that DuBois employed in his text.

## **Queer Movements and Class Politics in New York City**

**Michelle Esther O'Brien (New York University)**

New York City's lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) movements are among the largest and best known in the world. They have achieved an impressive range of legal and legislative victories, securing nearly full legal equality. Yet queer and trans New Yorkers are more likely to live in poverty than their straight counterparts, and face police brutality, mounting unemployment, low-wages, and the dismantling of welfare provision. Based on extensive interviews with NYC LGBTQ and AIDS activists, *Queer Movements and Class Politics* argues the priorities, scale, successes and limitations of the city's LGBTQ and AIDS movements were decisively shaped by the city's changing political economy. Financialization, and the particular dynamics of finance sector employment, created a significant strata of wealthy supporters of gay rights eager to fund campaigns for legal equality. Simultaneously, welfare austerity and the eroding power of the city's working class isolated and hurt low-income queer and trans people. This research, unlike most of the emerging literature on sexuality and capitalism, carefully considers concrete empirical dynamics of movement decision-making and constraints.

## **Blacking Out: Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* and the Historicity of Anti-Blackness**

**Sean O'Brien (University of Alberta)**

Triangulating black unemployment, anti-black police violence and the spread of riots in moments of financial crisis, this paper reads Ralph Ellison's visionary 1952 novel *Invisible Man* in relation to what Giovanni Arrighi identifies as the US systemic cycle of accumulation. In his structuralist account of developments in the capitalist world-system, Arrighi adopts Fernand Braudel's model of the longue dure, with its seasonal logic of hegemonic transition whereby autumn for one declining global hegemon means spring for the next. For Ellison's unnamed narrator, whose struggle for visibility is presciently tied to the rise and fall of American growth, spring too carries its stench of death. When the US cycle reaches its own crisis of accumulation in the late 1960s, and the long American century enters its autumnal downturn, the expulsion of labour from the site of production will sound the death knell for African American Bildung. Anticipating the coming of autumn in terms of exhaustion and abjection, *Invisible Man* envisions the end of American economic hegemony as a crushing experience of social death. Tracing the relationship

between precarity and the American novel across this transitional period, this paper revisits *Invisible Man* to chart the decline of the American century from within its zenith.

## **What of the Subjective Factor in the Struggle: Species-Being, the Cathartic Moment, Aesthetic Consciousness?**

**John Eustice O'Brien (Professor Sociology and Urban Studies:  
Independent Researcher, Paris)**

The purpose of this research is to engage debate about the figure of species being by Marx in his Early Writings, linking it with what he later identified as the subjective factor related to the socialist struggle in *Capital-I*. Attention to the analysis by Gramsci lays the grounds for discussing an original notion of aesthetic consciousness, as developed in a recent *Critique of Rationality* by the author (O'Brien Brill 2016); as the basis for judgment on which collective mobilization depends. In politics, timing is everything and the socialist struggle takes many forms. Without need for dynamite or cannons, one might suppose that the Gramscian cathartic moment (i.e. an intensely liberating civic energy for change) would surely arise now, a popular opposition see the day, to overcome the grip of Global Capitalist Agencies, allowing a socialist mode of governance to overtake the Western countries, one by one. After all, class inequality in the West is at astronomical levels (USA Top Bosses earn 347 times the average income of their employees). Why does nothing occur? Are material factors of capitalism's contradictions only necessary but not sufficient conditions for a major social-political shift, because the subjective factor is downplayed in the formula? Generally associated with class consciousness, does not material realization of species-being include subjective factors, attention might shift focus to the non-techno-material grounds for radical social change? As Mandel laments in his *Introduction to Capital-I*, even if apparently planned otherwise, Marx never formally addressed the subjective factor. While certain of his followers did so at the turn of the 20th century, since this aspect of project was not clearly laid out by Marx, the tendency has been to emphasize the material factors of concentration and contradiction that constitute the society-fracturing objective yield of unbridled speculative capitalism. Gramsci placed this issue at the center of his writings; rather than wait passively for the critical nexus of material conditions to declenche the inevitable revolutionary shift, might not shrewd political hands set the process in motion and carry it through? This is to assume that more than the ephemeral residue of material events, the Symbolic domain of human collective action is an autonomous source of mobilizing energy, which may lead a movement for change even when material factors associated with the Technical Domain are less than ideal. The purpose of this paper is to explore the role of the subjective factor for revolutionary change, treated as an expanded view of species-being; as then taken in hand by Gramsci and others in the battle for change. A general systems model is used to formulate a critique aimed at leaving aside not the material history of societal change, but the dead weight of capitalist past; arguing that there are ways to activate the subjective intention toward meaning, as basis for judgment of collective circumstance; accelerating movement against exploitation, since the freedom of each depends on the determination of all.

# **The Fight Against Water Charges and Class Struggle in Modern Ireland**

**Paul O'Connell (Reader, SOAS)**

The Easter Rising of 1916 was a seminal event in the foundation of modern Ireland. The Proclamation of the Irish Republic contained a vision of a radical, egalitarian republic. That vision was stillborn. Although the subsequent War of Independence led to the establishment of an independent Irish state, the partition of the island, and the scars of the Civil War, meant that the terms of political debate and struggle in Ireland were, for most of the Twentieth century, dominated by the national question. As a result of this, radical politics in Ireland never really developed the strong, clear class antagonisms evident in most other developed capitalist countries. For decades, the most militant work class activists were drawn into various aspects of the struggle for national liberation. As a result, Ireland has never really developed revolutionary working-class organisations or trade unions, and the terms of political debate and class consciousness have been markedly circumscribed. One consequence of the relative peace delivered by the Good Friday Agreement is that, gradually, the coordinates of political debate and consciousness have been shifting. The emergence of mass, working class movements against austerity in Ireland, particularly the fight against Water Charges in the Republic, provide an entry point for thinking about the current, and shifting, state of politics in Ireland today.

## **Capital's First Colony? A Political Marxist engagement with the Historiography of Irish Underdevelopment**

**Tiarnan O'Muilleoir (Independent scholar)**

This paper is an attempt to examine the theoretical and historiographical debates surrounding the economic underdevelopment of Ireland in the period between the Plantation of Ulster (1609) and the Famine of 1845-52, drawing on the theoretical resources of the Political Marxist tradition. Irelands relative economic backwardness over the course of the 18th and 19th century served as a source of considerable interest for contemporary philosophical and economic commentators, in particular due to its proximity and political linkages to the worlds first industrialised nation in Britain. Marx himself offered several analyses of the Irish Question, most notably the commentary in Chapter 25 of Capital on surplus populations. During the renewed theoretical debates on the left occasioned by the national liberation movements of the 1960s and 70s Marxs writings on Ireland along with those in India were cited in order to underwrite the credentials of the Dependency and World Systems theorists of the development of underdevelopment. However this approach was subject to devastating theoretical and empirical critique by a range of scholars, mostly notably Robert Brenner in his 1977 essay A Critique of Neo-Smithian Marxism. On the other hand the standard academic historiography of Ireland has shied away from a proper accounting with the legacy of colonisation and Empire, and instead tends to portray underdevelopment as the product of irrational native obstinacy to technological improvement or the inevitable and natural outworking of a neutral and free market. By contrast, this paper offers a theoretically rigorous and historically specific analysis of three critical and inter-linked social processes which contributed to Irish underdevelopment: firstly, the expansionary economic and political dynamics of agrarian capitalism underpinning the nascent English states colonial and imperial policy in Ireland; secondly, the imposition and evolution of a distinctly non-capitalist set of social property relations across most of the island following the Cromwellian conquest; and thirdly, by examining the exception of Ulster, where the exigencies of settler-colonisation produced a market-

dependent class of merchants and petty commodity producers intimately tied to the expanding market for linen goods in Britain and the Atlantic colonies, eventually allowing for the unfolding of a fully capitalist market in land and labour through a series of protracted class struggles.

## **Turkeys Failed Coup and its Aftermath: Permanent State of Exception or Exceptional State Form?**

**Sebnem Oguz (Baskent University, Ankara)**

In recent years, the political regime in Turkey is moving towards an exceptional state form as defined by Poulantzas, incorporating a profound restructuring of the relations between ideological and repressive state apparatuses and an increase in the relative autonomy of the state. Since the Suru massacre in July 2015, the country has drifted into a spiral of polarization, violence and personalized control of power in the state. Since then, the political regime increasingly demonstrates elements of fascism, such as permanent mobilization of the masses and paramilitary forces, and a particular ideology that combines an appeal to the power fetishism of the petty bourgeoisie and cult of the leader. Following the failed coup attempt of 15 July 2016, all these elements have further come to the fore, as Erdogan has invited masses to flood into the city centres for days, while at the same time declaring a prolonged state of emergency to radically change the personnel and structure of the repressive and ideological state apparatuses. Drawing upon Poulantzas concept of fascism as an exceptional form of capitalist state, this presentation will analyze how these developments have shaped the current state form in Turkey. In doing this, the study will critically evaluate the works of Carl Schmitt, Giorgio Agamben and Mark Neocleous who approach the state of exception from a different perspective.

## **Lenin's Idea of Dialectics**

**Vesa Oittinen (Professor, Aleksanteri Institute (Center for Russian and East European Studies), University of Helsinki, Finland)**

In my paper, I will take a critical look at some myths concerning Lenin as a dialectician. According to a received view, one can distinguish between two Lenins. The one is the dogmatic Lenin of Materialism and Empirio-Criticism (1909), which depicted Marxist philosophy yet in a simplistic manner as a mechanical theory of reflection (and later became canonical for Soviet philosophy); the other is Lenin of the Philosophical Notebooks of 1914-15, when Lenin studied Hegel and became a dialectician in the proper sense of the term. This thesis does not, however, hold water when examined with a critical eye. It can be shown that there is a remarkable continuity in Lenins thought. The main problem for Lenin was the question of the subjective factor vs. objective presuppositions in the revolutionary process. This was an old problem which had preoccupied several generations of Russian revolutionaries since the mid-nineteenth century and found its most poignant expression in the clash between the Narodnik theoretician Mikhailovsky and Marx. Mikhailovsky accused Marx of objectivism and neglect of the subjective factor in history. Lenin was from the beginning critical of the subjectivism and utopism of the Narodniks, but at the same time he had to wrestle with the objectivist (and indeed, mechanistic) view of history of the mainstream Marxism of the Second International. This dilemma was the main source of what later has been called Lenins dialectics. He was not interested in the logical aspects of dialectics or the problems of its categorical system. Thus, Lenins dialectical ideas

do not base on the reception of Hegel per se, although Hegel of course helped him after 1914 to formulate many of his ideas more clearly. Actually, Lenin did not study Hegel much before 1914/15. His knowledge of dialectics based on the Hegel reception of previous, pre-Marxist Russian revolutionaries. Like Herzen, Lenin considered dialectics above all as an algebra of revolution.

## **Considerations on 'Red Africa': Revolutionary Theory and Practice in Lusophone African Socialist Thought, 1956-1986**

**Kevin Ochieng Okoth (University of Oxford)**

This paper aims to re-examine the place of Lusophone African Socialist Thought (in the period from 1956 to 1986) within Marxist discourses, and argues that the theoretical adjustments it made to orthodox Marxist theory lend credibility to the idea of stretching Marxism beyond its geographical and historical origins. The intellectual tradition that I refer to as PALOP Marxism (PALOP being the acronym for the Portuguese-speaking African colonies) is discussed with a focus on the relationship between theory and revolutionary practice, to argue for the contemporary desirability of a historically, culturally, economically, and politically informed revolutionary Marxist approach to theorising emancipation and anti-capitalism in the Global South. The unique nature of Portuguese colonial rule (its atypical stance on race and Portugal's own economic weakness) led to a distinctive relationship between class and race in Lusophone African colonies. Consequently, the PALOP Marxist revolutionaries had to address both issues as interrelated and constitutive of one another, rather than as opposites, of which one should be privileged over the other. To place PALOP Marxism within the Marxist intellectual landscape, this paper briefly explores the genealogy of Western Marxism and argues that the lack of internationalism (or as some have argued, inherent Eurocentrism) in Marxist theory is not characteristic of its entire theoretical system, but rather the result of developments in 20th century Marxist thought in Western Europe. Moreover, whereas Western Marxism distanced itself from the orthodox ideal of a unity between theory and practice, the PALOP tradition created theory from concrete political struggle and united thought and practice in political movements that remained closely connected to the parts of the population that they were attempting to emancipate. Looking towards the interrupted intellectual tradition of PALOP Marxism, may also help us better understand the role of race and nationalism in relation to the international class struggle. Thus, this paper attempts to both historically analyse an anti-imperialist movement and its relationship to Marxism, as well as retrieve its theoretical contributions, with the aim of creating a new way forward for intellectuals and activists seeking to challenge coloniality, capitalism, imperialism and racism on a materialist basis.

## **Sweden Between Revolutions 1917-20**

**Kjell Östberg, Hakan Blomqvist (Södertörn University, Stockholm, Sweden)**

Already in the spring of 1917, that is just after the Russian February Revolution and earlier than in most other countries, there was an extensive outbreak of social struggle in Sweden. The Swedish potato revolution, as it has been called, played a decisive role in the final stage of Swedish democratization. Protests and demonstrations were initially mostly spontaneous uprisings, and were not started by political parties or leftist groups. The first weeks actions were often led by women. The demands raised were mostly linked to the

cost of living and the food situation. Independent, embryonic workers organizing was emerging. In several places council-like structures were developed. At this point differences between the various directions within the workers movement become more prominent. They should be seen against the background of the split within social democracy in February 1917, also earlier than in most other countries. The first part, by Hkan Blomqvist, will deal with the experiences of council structures that developed in different part of Sweden. It will focus on the results of empirical studies of local experiences of committees that tried to gain societal control of food supply but also raised wider demands for workers needs and rights. The second part by Kjell stberg, will focus on the different strategies inside the labour movement: On one side, the new Left partys attempts to develop the idea of councils trying to adapt to the international experiences leading to the affiliation to the Komintern. On the other, the majority Social Democratic party and its efforts to integrate the struggle into parliamentary structures. Attention will also be given to the role of the trade unions. The outcome of this conflict has also to be seen in the shadows of the Russian and German revolutions. It was going to form the Swedish political landscape for the rest of the century. Associate professor Hkan Blomqvist and professor Kjell stberg are historians at Sdertrn University, Stockholm, Sweden and former directors of the Institute of Contemporary history. They have both written extensively on social mobilization and the Swedish labour movement.

## **Articulations of Migration and Crisis in Mainstream Discourses and Policies**

### **Lafazani Olga (Harokopia University, Greece)**

If the figure of the "illegal migrant" was the dominant representation of migration in the midst of the Greek financial crisis, the public discourse changed during the summer of 2015 into terms that are more humanitarian. The massive movement of people was named a "crisis" and the "illegal migrant" was transformed into a "refugee" while gender, age, and nationality were mobilized to contextualize this change. However, even in this period refugees were welcomed as long as they were in transit and as long as they thankfully received hospitality. Whenever they were involved in struggles, they were presented as ungrateful and as subjects who did not had the right to resist. Similarly, solidarity was celebrated as an individual act of kindness connected to the "Greek culture" of hospitality. Collective attempts of solidarity groups who also posed political demands and participated in common struggles were described as "inciting" revolts and "dragging" the refugees to demonstrate. Meanwhile, as the temporality of the "refugee crisis" begun being belied, the politics of bordering, control and repression started re-gaining ground. The signing of the EU- Turkey deal came to seal the gradual closing of the Balkan route ending to the entrapment of more than 50.000 refugees in Greece and the transformation of the Aegean islands into a buffer border zone between Turkey and Greece. Not only Frontex but also NATO started patrolling the sea borders. The open Camps were slowly transformed into Hot Spots and then in Deportation Centres in a process of sorting the "real" refugees from the "fake" ones.

The aim of this paper is twofold. On the one hand, to trace the transformations and continuities in mainstream discourses around migration in different contexts framed as "crises". On the other hand and in relation to the above, to discuss the transformations of bordering policies trying to unravel different dynamics and power relations at play both from the above and from below.

# **Rethinking Transition as Struggle, Experimentation and Cultural Revolution: Value Form Theory and Questions of Revolutionary Strategy**

**Dimitris Papafotiou (PhD Candidate, University of Patras, Department of Business Administration),  
Panagiotis Sotiris (Independent Researcher)**

The coincidence of the 100 years since the October Revolution and the 150 years since the publication of the first volume of *Capital*, open up the question of the relation between the theoretical questions associated with the experience of the October revolution regarding revolutionary strategy and the questions related to value theory and in particular value-form theory. What we want to suggest is that value form theory presents also a way to think about questions of revolutionary strategy and socialist transition. This is based in our reading of value form theory which suggests that the emergence of a social form whose reproduction entails the reproduction of particular capitalist social relations and relations of production, was the result of an entire series of singular and molecular social practices, struggles and conflicts, economic but also political and ideological. In this sense, it is impossible to put an end to the value form by decree and the plan in a certain way reproduces elements of the value form, including fetishistic results. Instead, what is needed is an entire period of experimentation with new forms of organization of production and distribution, but also of new political forms and new forms of collective intellectuality in a constant struggle against the reproduction of capitalist social relations and forms, and in constant antagonistic contradictions with the capitalist mode of production. Only by this extensive and expansive form of social experimentation and transformation and struggle it is possible to see the emergence of radically novel social relations and configurations that would be in a position to be reproduced as social forms. We think that this was the insight behind Lenins simultaneous turn toward NEP, as a coming in terms with the reality of the transition and the impossibility to abolish social relations by decree, and a project of extended social and cultural transformation exemplified in his call for a cultural revolution. We think that such an insight is even more pertinent today in any potential renewal of revolutionary strategy.

## **What's Made When Art's Made, and What's it Worth?**

**Bryan Parkhurst**

This paper will draw out the different and conflicting ways Marx's formulations of the concepts of socially necessary labor time and the labor theory of value have to be interpreted and applied depending on one's view of how / whether / how much it is the case that information has value. Secondly it will explore the question of whether various cases of art making should or should not be understood in terms of the production of information.



## **Encounters Betwixt and Between: Contemporary Art Curatorial Performances and the Left in the Republic of Cyprus**

**Despina Pasia (UCL Institute of Education, Department of Culture, Communication and Media)**

Contemporary art curatorial practice in the Republic of Cyprus, and what we could broadly term left-wing or leftist visions, ideas and practices, have been crossing paths in unexpected ways, especially since 2010. They are unexpected, due to the novelty of the phenomenon, but also due to the fact that in many cases the initiators of these encounters do not consciously draw associations between the two realms. In this presentation I unfold the content and the nature of these subtle encounters through the examination of four recent curatorial projects. I first look briefly at some core characteristics of Cypriot leftist thought and praxis in order to demarcate the ideological field within which the encounters I examine take place. Next, I argue that recent contemporary art curatorial work in Cyprus has occasioned crossings with ideas which have been nurtured by the Cypriot Left through the inserting and employment of two interconnected discourses; namely, a semantic discourse over what constitutes Cyprus and Cyprioticity, and a curatorial discourse over the actual ways curation is put to work. In the third part of the presentation I conclude by claiming that curation has performed these encounters rather unwittingly within a social framework delineated by a specter of Marx and conditions related to the history of the local Left. The study of such uncanny encounters provides insight to the not-so-visible-ways with which Marxism bares relevance to present-day conditions at places that experience post-colonial condition and have recent memories of armed conflict.

## **Ploughed Fields and Virgin Forests: Bogdanov Versus Trotsky on Proletarian Culture**

**Evgeni Pavlov (Metropolitan State University of Denver)**

Trotsky's engagement with cultural themes in 1923-26 (published in 1927 as the twenty-first volume of Trotsky's collected works) addressed an already controversial topic of proletarian culture that first emerged in pre-1917 conversations about the future socialist state and society by Alexander Bogdanov. This conversation was revisited after the end of the Civil War now the topic was Bogdanov-inspired Proletkult, Lenin's criticism of Bogdanov (and Proletkult), and contributions to the debate from various other proponents of proletarian culture (ex. Platon Kerzhentsev or Aleksei Gastev). Trotsky's contribution in late 1920s thus serves as a kind of summary of the debate and a powerful critique of the very notion of proletarian culture. This paper presents Trotsky's contribution and contrasts it with pre-1917 theoretical works by Bogdanov. A result is a series of questions addressed to contemporary students of the Russian Revolution on the relevance of the issues of culture and socialism.

# Caliban, Cuba, and the Caribbean Poetic-Political Tradition

**Andrea Penman-Lomeli (Columbia University)**

Caliban, from Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, has been rearticulated by various post-colonial writers, including George Lamming and Aimé Césaire, who have related the Prospero/Caliban relationship to colonial relationships in Africa and the Caribbean. Continuing this tradition, in 1971 the Cuban author, Roberto Fernández Retamar, wrote an essay, *Caliban*, that portrayed Cuba as a subject of U.S. imperialism. However, Fernández Retamar imagined the socialist present as free of the postcolonial questions that animated the concerns of authors like Fanon and Césaire, and in doing so he reflects the erasures of the subjectivities of the Cuban people. Reflective of a much larger nation-building project, this essay represents the salient features of Cuba's socialist national identity and the issues like the tensions between race and class which were silenced to maintain national unity. In Stuart Hall's analysis of Gramsci's understanding of power for the purposes of race, he describes the way in which a hegemonic relationship is created, moving past the economic reductionism of class cohesion and underscoring the erasure of differences necessary for the successful consolidation of goals. Understanding the articulation of power as such suggests that working class cohesion must necessarily overcome a range of differences specific to cultural, political and geographic factors used in defining identity, rather than as classical Marxist theory would argue be assumed will erode systematically and inevitably as part of a global historical tendency. Specifically in the Cuban context, the elusion of these differences, specifically of the particular histories and memories of some, was vital to situating Cuba as anti-imperial in relation to the U.S., and in alliance with a Third World and anti-capitalist struggle. The essay, *Caliban*, although not constitutive of, is reflective of attempts at a nation-building project and elucidates, in certain ways, the process of the creation of hegemony necessary for a revolution. In placing Fernández Retamar's *Caliban* within a genealogy of political contestations, how do we attend to the dissimilarities between his *Caliban* and those of his forebearers? In this paper, I argue that that Fernández Retamar's treatment of *Caliban* demonstrates the hegemonic unification of a Cuban national identity, animated by a particular opposition to imperial relationships, which excludes significant identity markers that eventually undermine the particular successes of the socialist project.

## Abortion as Strike, Abortion as Riot?

**Eleanor Penny (University College London)**

This paper starts by examining the recent women's strikes to secure reproductive rights and abortion access (e.g. in Ireland and Poland). I will first examine the juncture in which these strikes take place - one of extreme gendered division of labour, aggravated by austerity-driven dismantling of institutions of social reproduction. Under these circumstances, I argue that not only is the strike-for-abortion effective - but that abortion itself may be thought of as a kind of social strike. There are two senses of this. First, it's a refusal of labour in its concrete form; as enforced birth often spells a life of unpaid labour for women. (This is a necessary but non-sufficient condition for a strike). Secondly, it's a refusal to produce labour-power. This can be understood as disruptive to capitalist production whether or not you agree that social reproduction produces exchange-value (as opposed to simply use-value). However, this runs into difficulties given the double-characteristic of social reproduction; that it produces not only wage-labouring life, but all life - including life resistance to or troublesome for capital. There are further difficulties; for marginalised groups, abortion is neither a clearly voluntary refusal of work, nor clearly disruptive to

capital. To illustrate this, I explore medical and biopolitical systems in the post-bellum US; a collapse of capitalist and white-supremacist interests resulting in attempts to manage excess populations not needed to sustain the industrial reserve army. Indeed, these interventions show us that not all domestic/socially reproductive work is productive for capital, and therefore that its refusal is not necessarily a strike, properly understood. I then go on to suggest that we might usefully think of the resistance/refusal in abortion as a kind of riot, following Joshua Clovers analysis of the riot as the tactic of the multitude used to disrupt sites of capitalist accumulation (in this case, the productive body).

## **Book Launch: 'Art and Production' by Boris Arvatov (Pluto Press, 2017)**

**Alexei Penzin (University of Wolverhampton), John Roberts  
(University of Wolverhampton), John Roberts (University of  
Wolverhampton), Maria Chehonadskih (CRMEP at Kingston  
University), Maria Chehonadskih (CRMEP at Kingston  
University)**

Boris Arvatov's 'Art and Production' (originally published in 1926) is a classic of the early Soviet avant-garde's theory. It is a crucial intervention for those seeking to understand the social dynamic of art and revolution during the period. Derived from the internal struggles of Soviet Constructivism, as it confronted the massive problems of cultural transformation after 'War Communism', Arvatov's writing is a major force in the split that occurred in the revolutionary horizons of Constructivism in the early 1920s. Critical of early Constructivism's social-aesthetic process of art's transformation of daily life, Arvatov polemicalises for the devolution of artistic skills directly into the relations of production and the factory. Addressing issues such as artistic labour and productive labour, the artist as technician, art and multidisciplinary and a life for art beyond 'art', 'Art and Production' offers a timely and compelling manifesto. The book will be presented by its two co-editors and authors of its preface and afterword, John Roberts and Alexei Penzin. Maria Chehonadskih will be a respondent for the presentation. Steve Edwards (HM) will be a chair of the presentation.

## **Antiquity and Modernity of Soviet Marxism. Presentation of Special Issue of the Journal Stasis (2, 2017)**

**Alexei Penzin (University of Wolverhampton, Institute of  
Philosophy, Moscow), Keti Chukhrov (Higher School  
of Economics (Moscow)), Maria Chehonadskih  
(Center for Research in Modern European  
Philosophy (CRMEP), Kingston) Evgeni V. Pavlov  
(Metropolitan State University of Denver)**

The special issue of the journal Stasis (bilingual, RU-EN) is dedicated to the contemporary assessments of the key thinkers of the Soviet creative Marxism, to celebrate the 1917-2017 anniversary. This issue of Stasis includes, among others, the articles on the early Soviet legal theorist Evgeny Pashukanis (by Toni Negri), on the polemics of Plekhanov, Bogdanov and Lenin about 'orthodox' Marxism, on Leo Vygotsky and communist individuation, on Boris

Porshnev's negative anthropology, and on Ilyenkov's activity theory and 'new materialism'. The issue includes two translations of classical texts of Soviet Marxism - 'Cosmology of the Spirit,' a visionary text by early Evald Ilyenkov, and 'Converted Forms', by Merab Mamardashvili; the issue also includes an interview with an important post-Soviet thinker Valery Podoroga about social and ideological conditions of late Soviet Marxism. The issue will be presented by its three co-editors (Maria Chekhonadskih, Alexei Penzin and Keti Chukhrov), and by one of its authors, Evgeni Pavlov. From the editorial statement: "Fredric Jameson once pointed out that the Marxist tradition is already our Antiquity due to its significance and historical distance. The same could be said about the most paradoxical version of this tradition Soviet Marxism. However, there are particular qualities, which singles it out from the classical antiquity of Marxist tradition. Thus, even internationally-known Soviet works (by Vygotsky, Bakhtin and some others) are not perceived as belonging to a unitary theoretical tradition and are even less associated with Marxism and the heritage of 1917. It may therefore seem that the October Revolution of 1917, although being recognised as the key event of the short twentieth century, has not created a universally-recognizable and consolidated body of thought. It is indeed, then, a difficult task to outline this field and that is why the current lens of historical distance might be helpful. First, because it was often expressed not in theoretical books but in literary works, manifestos, and political essays, the considerable part of which have remained unknown. Second, after the Second World War, in the conditions created by the Cold War this formation of thought was known only as an exotic object, labelled as Eastern or Soviet Marxism. In the presupposed dichotomy, Western Marxism was typically attributed an unconditional innovative value, whereas Soviet Marxism was seen under the vast umbrella of dogmatism or Stalinist diamat. The core of Soviet theory was mostly variations on Hegelian Marxism but with original connections of ideas. From the very beginning, already in the 1920s, it began to formulate the dilemmas that would only much later become a focus of Western Marxist philosophy questions such as Hegel or Spinoza? or Dialectic or immanent thought? that were debated in the West from the 1960s onwards. But it also tried to resolve these dilemmas in an innovative way, with interesting attempts to produce a theory which would avoid the traps of this alternative, in a Marxist anthropology of labour and activity theory, as well as materialist ontology (in the works of Lev Vygotsky, Evald Ilenkov, Boris Porshnev and some other thinkers). It is important to note that the formation of Hegelian Marxism in the 50s and 60s and its peculiar relation to Spinozism is difficult to understand without the context of intellectual debates about materialism and monism before and after the October revolution. In this respect, a provocative fusion of empiricism and Marxism (Bogdanov) or Engels and Spinoza (Plekhanov, Deborin) corresponded to an uneasy task to answer ontological and epistemological questions which contemporary Western Marxism have somewhat ignored. Unlike Western Marxism, Soviet philosophy was not grounded on the post-Kantian idea of critique (in that case, of bourgeois culture and society). Its affirmative and speculative character emerged on the basis of revolutionary rupture with old society. Similar to the Soviet avant-garde, it prepared a clean canvas for the composition of a new world that has never previously existed or been explored. From today's perspective, this world of Soviet antiquity still remains unknown; it is waiting for reintroduction to contemporary debates.

## **Marxism Without Class: A Critique of Postone's Interpretation of Marx**

**Mozart Silvano Pereira (Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro (State University of Rio de Janeiro) - UERJ)**

Moishe Postone wrote his well-known book "Time, labor and social domination" as an attempt to rescue and reread Marx's social theory in a historical context in which, due to the strengthening of neoliberalism and the end of Soviet socialism, Marxism was attacked from all sides. However, although his goal was commendable critique of dogmatism and unilateralism present what he called "traditional Marxism", the result of his bold intellectual endeavor was the creation of a no less unilateral and problematic interpretation of Marx. This paper intends to present a critique of the way in which Postone, in reconstructing the categories of Capital on the basis of the logic of the automatic movement of value, ends by withdrawing from the critique of political economy the centrality of class antagonism and thereby mutilating the power of Marxian analysis of capitalism. Postone's interpretation of Marx attempts to demonstrate that the unfolding of the categories of commodity and value creates a form of abstract and impersonal domination, but in doing so he systematically ignores that the dynamics of capital accumulation inevitably lie on exploitation of labor and that the valorization of value necessarily implies the production of surplus value and, consequently, the domination of one class over another. Thus the paper discusses how Postone's strategy of imputing the categories of class struggle, of labor exploitation, and of private ownership of the means of production to a dogmatic and outdated "traditional Marxism" leads him to, despite the pretext of saving Marx, to give up a vital part of the Marxian critique of political economy in a way that his theory becomes incoherent and barely stands on its foot.

## **Women and Labour in the 17th Century: Social reproduction theory and political marxism**

**Joana Perrone (University of Oxford)**

This work started as a comparative study of women and labour in England and France in the 17th century, but it has been expanded to use this historical comparison to try and map theoretical interrogations concerning how womens labour is perceived within historical materialism analysis of early modern Europe. While following the lead of a number of international relations scholars who aim to bring historical sociology to the discipline, this essay hopes to question the lack of the usage of gender as an analytical category within historical materialism and, more specifically, political Marxism. Therefore, this work will analyse the ways in which the concept of labour changed in the 17th century England and France, especially concerning womens labour, while simultaneously engaging with both social reproduction theory and political marxism, especially the work of Ellen Wood and Robert Brenner. The historical analysis will then work to provide the background for a discussion on the notions of gender and class as instrumental for a full historical analysis of socio-property relations in these countries.

# Can Ecosocialist Praxis be a Real Alternative?

**Gordon Peters**

While recent scholarship and theoretical writings [e.g Bellamy Foster, Moore, Malm, and others] have indeed helped to rescue the ecological in Marx and contributed to a wider reframing of how capitalist predominance in the modern world is altering the natural basis for human life, this is seldom reflected in ecosocialism as a political response. Arguments on growth, steady state and de-growth tend to be niche activities. At the same time both climate change and ecological spoliation of potentially catastrophic proportions are fairly widely admitted in the discussions in popular media and discourse. That environmental and social justice are inter-connected is accepted in Green circles and to some extent in left politics but seldom at least in the reformist left to the extent of system challenge on the political economy of growth. Can ecosocialism address this deficit?

This paper will attempt to set out how and possibly where an ecosocialist praxis can be developed, and where local, national and international links are best placed to challenge both current orthodoxies and to demonstrate how solidaristic political economy can be a real alternative to capital and class domination. It does not under-estimate corporate power or cultural hegemony, nor right wing populist responses, but seeks to learn from trade union, community protection, boycott and disinvestment, keep it in the ground, anti-fracking, and indigenous movements. Where can the weak points of capital accumulation and reproduction be increasingly undone?

Has ecosocialist praxis any organisational answer to the operation of power?

## Beyond Party and Class? Willi Münzenberg, Media and the KPD

**Fredrik Petersson (bo Akademi University)**

Willi Münzenberg (1889-1940) was pivotal in developing the public image of KPD in the Weimar republic. This centred on developing various public channels, capable of disseminating propaganda in favour of creating a positive picture of communism as a mass movement in Germany. The paper aims at discussing Münzenbergs infamous characterization of being the Red Hugenberg in Germany (which refers to Weimars right-wing media mogul Alfred Hugenberg), and the reasons for why he earned this reputation. One crucial aspect that explicates why and how is to assess Münzenbergs publishing house in Berlin, Neuer Deutscher Verlag, and some of the publications, for example, Arbeiter-Illustrierte-Zeitung (A-I-Z), Mahnruf, and Der Rote Aufbau, and how these publications furthered the creation of German communism as a public discourse. In conclusion, the paper shall address the competitive relation between Münzenbergs media enterprise and the sanctioned party press of the KPD.

# Romano Alquati and the Hyper-Communist hypothesis

## Gian Luca Pittavino (Independent researcher)

Romano Alquati, mainly known as the inventor of co-research, never stop reasoning about Revolution and the conditions of its possibility, since his Operaistic heresy to the latest and lonely works on Hyper-industrial and Neo-modernity. Marx versus Marx (and not only beyond), Lenin versus Marx, working class as Capital's negativity, working class denying itself in order to abolish classes, class and state's extinction in the necessary transition: these are just some of the issues that this anomalous sociologist without party faced throughout his life, in an uninterrupted life path scattered in multiple trajectories of research. During the 90's, politically isolated and discussing with very few comrades, he tried to draw out the axis upon which build a new Hyper-communist political organization. According to Alquati, the historical limit of the Communist experience with the exception of a few moments, mainly restricted to the Bolshevik revolution lies in the unattempted search of a true way out from the capitalistic system, endlessly moving on an a medium-low level of social reality. Workers' movement, through its institutions, restricted itself inside the role of a conflictual jet innovative agent of the capitalistic system, binded in the circle of struggle-development, where innovation is always functional to Capital's valorization. A new revolutionary subject up to the times we live in should explicitly aim for the de-commodification of the living-human-capability, a notion proposed by Alquati in order to replace the classical and narrow concept of labour-force. De-commodifying as a process aiming to an end, that has to extinguish Workers and has to criticize and convert to its own purposes, toward other developments, the Techno- science of capitalistic modernity. Although we're living adverse conditions, a way-out from Capitalism is still possible, but it won't occur spontaneously. This is why the quest for a political form geared to the challenges of Neo-modernity combining mass' vanguards, roots militancy, political cadres and elites, obliquely strengthened by and within the Hyper-proletarian general intellect endures as main political question for current and forthcoming Communist theory

# Derivatives Market - Extraction and Distribution of Surplus Value Through Risk Management

## Tomasz Plominski (University of Warsaw)

Derivatives market, widely understood to be a primary cause of a recent global crisis, is commonly seen as a space of purely speculative movement of fictitious capital. Marx's depiction of financial capital in third volume of Capital sets the stage for analysis, but does not, understandably, encompass the complex character of modern financial structures. In the course of XX century, a theory of quantifiable risk, as opposed to unquantifiable uncertainty, has been developed, giving the capital, together with a series of deregulations from 1980s onwards, a new toolset to manage the precarious nature of value production derivatives, financial instrument enabling the trading of risk exposure abstracted from the assets themselves. Drawing upon contributions from Tony Norfield, Dick Bryan and Michael Rafferty, and Maurizio Lazzarato, I would like to examine the functional character of derivatives market as an exemplification of the capitals process of risk management in its relation to surplus value production. Financial capitals circulation of commodified risk has acted as a catalyst for simultaneous processes of: 1) subordination of working class in a form of debt relation and secondary extraction of surplus value as credit interest, 2) technological advancement of value redistribution among capitalist class and stabilization of income flow. I will argue that, although financial capital per se is not a productive sector in terms of Marx's analysis, it plays an ever more important role in terms of value

appropriation in modern capitalism seen as a whole. The derivatives market generates a dual contradiction: on the one hand, the inseparable coexistence of hedging (as risk reduction) and speculation (as risk expansion) leads to inflation of crises. On the other hand, the pursuit of financial capital to appropriate part of wage in the form of credit interest requires it to reduce living labour and the workers life to quantified risk, which ultimately fails in face of its complexity and unpredictability.

## **Rosa Luxemburg's Writings on the 1906-06 Russian Revolution and Its Lessons for the 1917 Revolution**

### **Holger Politt**

This paper will explore Luxemburg's voluminous writings on the Russian Revolution of 1905-06 in terms of the illumination they shed on her later critique of the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917. Drawing upon dozens of recently discovered articles and essays composed by Luxemburg as the Revolution was unfolding, most of which are now available in the supplementary Vol. 6 of her *Gesammelte Werke*, this paper will point to her distinctive concept of socialist democracy as central to her response to revolutionary transformation.

## **The New History of Capitalism: The Problem of U.S. Slavery**

### **Charles Post**

The New Historians of Capitalism (NHC) claim that their refusal to “define” capitalism is an historical and theoretical virtue. In reality, NHC do have a concept of capitalism—a system of trade, finance and extra-economic coercion and dispossession. Unfortunately, these social processes have existed trans-historically. The problems with such an approach are particularly evident when the NHC turns to the discussion of plantation slavery in the US. Recent works by Johnson, Baptist and Beckert clearly establish that the southern planters had to “sell to survive” and were compelled to maximize profits. However, their confusion of capitalism with trade, finance and compulsion leads to numerous historical errors, an inability to analyze the specific dynamics of commercial plantation slavery and ultimately, to explain the origins of the US Civil War.

## **The Current Dual Crisis and Marx's Critical Theory of Value**

### **Moishe Postone**

In the face of the overarching structural social transformations of recent decades, which were rendered manifest by the crash of 2008 and its aftermath, there has been a resurgence of critical approaches to capitalism. Nevertheless, it is not always evident how capitalism is understood and how that understanding helps illuminate the contemporary global crisis. This paper suggests that a fundamental reinterpretation of Marx's *Capital* as a theory of a historically specific, abstract form of domination, grounded in value, a temporal form of wealth unique to capitalism, could help illuminate the contemporary dual crisis of



environmental degradation and the hollowing out of working society. At the same time, it might be able to contribute to the process of rethinking transformative politics today.

## **Michael Lebowitz's Critique of the Vanguard Marxism**

**Paul Raekstad (University of Amsterdam)**

The Russian Revolution, one of the most important social and political events in recent human history, is 100 years old this year. On such a momentous occasion, its worth looking at it with an eye to what it has to teach us in light of the goals we share with the Russian revolutionaries. This is important for several reasons. Recent years have seen the publication of some outstanding reassessments of Lenins thought and actions and another international capitalist crisis that has re-ignited critiques of capitalism as a mode of production, along with speculations about what to put in its place. We have seen the growth of a range of anti-capitalist and other radical social and political movements, from Occupy and the Movement of the Squares to Black Lives Matter and struggles for ecological democracy and justice. This has brought with it vital new debates about Marxism and socialist strategy, which this paper is concerned with. This paper discusses Michael Lebowitz analysis and critique of what he terms Vanguard Marxism, of which Lenin is considered to be a key representative. Lebowitz criticises Vanguard Marxism for being one-sided, ignoring the importance of human development and praxis. This is connected to vanguard Marxisms inadequately dialectical world-view. Thirdly, vanguard Marxism takes on its own class perspective not that of capitalists or proletarian self-emancipation, but that of the vanguard itself a perspective which is authoritarian, and legitimates installing authoritarian vanguard relations instead of free and democratic, socialist ones. After presenting Lebowitz critique of Vanguard Marxism, I consider that critique in light of recent works that aim to defend Lenin in particular against charges of authoritarianism, over-centralisation, etc. Here I argue that although these works shed much new and interesting light on Lenin, and do indeed respond well to prominent critiques of his thought and work, they do not suffice to defend either Lenin or Vanguard Marxism more broadly against Lebowitz three-pronged critique. Finally, I consider what import Lebowitzs critique can and should have for revolutionary Marxist theory and practice in the 21st Century. First, this should lead us to think about Marxism from the perspective of a body of theory committed first and foremost to human development and human self-emancipation. Second, we should foreground the theory of practice, and this should inform the way we think about social change. In particular, the theory or practice needs to be put to work in thinking about how we structure the deliberation, decision-making, and wider culture of our organisations and movements, and the impacts this will have on developing participants capacities, needs, and interests. This should lead us to a third point, which is to take another look at those forms of Marxism that Vanguard Marxism often ignored and suppressed, such as autonomism, council communism, and left Marxism, as well as the growing dialogue between Marxism and collectivist strands of anarchism. These have distinct weaknesses and shortcomings, but they have important experiments and lessons to offer about organisational structure and human development through revolutionary practice.

## **Capital in Nordic Countries**

**Paula Rauhala (PhD student, Philosophy, University of Tampere), Jussi Silvonen (PhD, University of Eastern Finland, Psychology)**

The translation of Capital in Finnish appeared in 1913-1918. The fact that Marx's major work was published only some 15 years later than the Finnish Labour Party was founded in 1899 is closely connected to the other main theme of the conference, the Russian Revolution. In the beginning of the 20th century the Grand Duchy of Finland was an economically and culturally autonomous part of the Russian empire. The 1905 revolution materialized in Finland as a general strike and mass demonstrations. In the wake of these events, a number of young intellectuals entered the Social Democratic Party. Among them was Edvard Gylling (1881-1937), who in 1908 forced through the decision of translating Capital into Finnish. The project was financed by the Finnish government. Such a project would most probably have been impossible without the revolutionary situation of 1905, without which Finnish worker's movement would not have gained the universal suffrage in 1906, as first in Europe. The great victory of social democrats in the parliamentary elections of 1907 40 per cent of the seats created exceptional conditions and Gylling acted promptly. In any other historical moment channeling the taxpayers money for such a project would have been unimaginable. Except one another narrow time window, right after Finland had lost war against Soviet Union. In 1946 the translator of Capital, Volume II, Mauri Rym (1911-1958) managed to get public funding for the translation and publication of the second volume of Capital. Rym translated the book mostly in jail during the Second World War. He was jailed due to his anti-war activities during the interim peace in 1940, just before Finland participated in war against Soviet Union. Our presentation is based on the chapter of Finland in the forthcoming volume The Routledge Handbook of Marx's 'Capital': A Global History of Translation, Dissemination and Reception, edited by Marcello Musto and Babak Amini.

## **The Dissemination of Marx's Capital in the World (1867-2017)**

**Paula Rauhala, Jussi Silvonen, Babak Amini, Stanimir Panayotov, Alex Cistelean**

Our panel will present an ongoing book project: The Routledge Handbook of Marx's 'Capital': A Global History of Translation, Dissemination and Reception. Edited by Marcello Musto and Babak Amini. The purpose of the project is to reconstruct the history of the dissemination and reception of Marx's Capital throughout the world. This collective research will be published on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the publication of Capital (1867 - 2017) and will represent the only complete account of the translations of Marx's magnum opus ever made. In our panel Babak Amini will present the forthcoming volume. The papers of Babak Amini, Paula Rauhala and Jussi Silvonen, Stanimir Panayotov and Alex Cistelean will concentrate on the histories of translation, dissemination and reception of Capital in different parts of the world.

## **Red Wedge Panel: Re-creating 1917**

The century since the Russian Revolution has seen aesthetic convention exploded several times over, in no small part due to the events that unfolded in Russia and beyond in 1917 and its aftermath. Geographic lines, temporal axes, and critical ways of assessing both were blurred and reshaped by a working-class seizure of power and the vision of a communist future. This panel, building off Red Wedges fourth issue (itself centered on the aesthetic meanings of 1917, forthcoming: October 2017) will assess how these changes have resonated over the past hundred years. Tracing backward, it will use as a starting point how a contemporary socialist artist might take inspiration from the Bolshevik Revolution and place it in the context of modern struggles. It will take a similar approach to geography, linking the cultural earthquakes from beyond Russias borders back to the streets of 1917 Moscow and St. Petersburg. Finally, it will map a legacy of theoretical engagement with the arts that was set in motion by the revolution and can navigate aesthetic evolution as capitalist development continued and radically changed through the 20th century.

## **Red Wedge panel: Art, music, and the return of the crowd**

The uprisings from 2010 onward and the recent rise of an activated far-right have both, in restarting history, re-introduced the specter of the crowd. What this means for culture and aesthetics has been brought into relief by the failures of mass leftwing movements and the ascendancy of right-wing populist politicians Trump, Orban, Modi, Duterte into their respective nations highest offices. Though the overdetermination of economics and politics in these phenomena is undeniable, there is a cultural and aesthetic valance to this dynamic seems to be better understood by the right than the left. The usage of aesthetic leveling of symbolically raising up a demographic that sees itself as marginalized can be employed toward actual liberation or further marginalization of the oppressed and exploited. This difference hinges on what Walter Benjamin identified as the divergence between the aestheticization of politics and the politicization of aesthetics. This panel built around the theme of Red Wedges third issue The Return of the Crowd (forthcoming: July 2017) will attempt to flesh out this difference in terms both theoretical and practical, historic and contemporary, in the context of popular culture and the avant-garde. In doing so it will map out how the left might reclaim and revive a dynamic cultural praxis. In addition to the two presentations, this panel will feature as discussant The Politics of Everybody author Holly Lewis. Lewis will interrogate and seek to draw out further conclusions from Billet and Turls assertions of aesthetics and crowd.

## **The Far Right and Fascism: Convergence, Competition and Radicalisation**

### **David Renton (Garden Court chambers)**

With the rise of Trump, Le Pen, and Brexit, a common activist approach is to say that the present is an age of fascism akin to the 1930s. While disagreeing with this approach (we are not in a fascist moment), the paper explores the utility of the concept of an age of fascism to explain the present day growth of the right, its coherence and its mutual support across borders (an alliance which is in principle antithetical of the self-description of the right as a series of political and economic nationalists), and the trend for todays far right to radicalise in government. Fascism was not, initially, a coherent movement. It lacked, at the start, any shared principles except the vaguest. It absorbed enthusiasts for feudalism, as well

as modernist admirers of an engineered future, it included political Christians, supporters of military government, displaced former anarchists and Marxists as well as homosocial supporters of a masculine order. Since Ernst Nolte, historians have talked of an "age of fascism" to describe how these traditions which under normal conditions would have diverged, became a single party in France, Italy, Germany, Romania, Britain etc. Part of the process was a dynamic of competition in which Mussolini would achieve a victory in one sphere (the March on Rome, sub-imperial hegemony over Austria or Spain) then Hitler would try to match and surpass these victories, causing Mussolini in turn to seek fresh victories of his own. The paper argues that this can be usefully compared to the contemporary dynamic under which Brexit was taken as the sign that Donald Trump and Marine Le Pen were capable of winning. And enthusiasts for the right (not just Breitbart but even the Daily Mail in Britain) then used Trump's victory to argue that Le Pen could triumph. These processes can help to explain how and why the far-right is a radicalising movement, and is likely to remain so for some time to come.

## **The Contours of a Queer Materialism**

**Paul Reynolds (Reader in Sociology and Social Philosophy  
Social Sciences, Edge Hill University, and Historical  
Materialism Editorial Board)**

In this paper I want to build on recent Marxist scholarship - Alderson 2016, Badgett 2001, Dee 2010, Drucker 2015, Field 1995, Floyd 2009, Gluckman and Reid eds. 1997, Hennessy 2000, Lewis 2016, Reynolds 2004, Wolf 2009, and Zavarzaeh, Ebert and Morton eds. 2001 that explores synergies between Marxism, queer theory and sexual politics. In doing so, I want to develop a particular analysis that notes that whilst creative synergies between Marxism and queer theory are possible, there are also substantive dissonances that need to be taken seriously in articulating a Marxist analysis of sexuality and sexual politics. The approach I offer towards what might be termed a Queer Materialism, employs Raymond Williams approach of cultural materialism, which grew out of the British Marxist Cultural Historians attempt to incorporate Gramscian analysis into their historical critiques. Williams constitution of base-superstructure, residual dominant and emergent cultures and hegemony allows for a sophisticated critical engagement between Marxist analyses and the constellations of queer theory, queer politics and identity politics, intersectionality and sexual humanist and constructionist analyses. I will argue that this framework complements, supports and developments the rapprochement between Marxists and those engaged in sexual politics and their theoretical critiques, and allows a nuanced understanding of the contradictions and paradoxes of recognition and identity under neo-liberalism, rights discourse, intersectionality and solidarity and freedom and emancipation as political objectives, with their different strategies and tactics. This will also involve some engagement with LeFebvre, De Certeau and critical studies of philosophical practice that recognise the cultural (and sexual) as vibrant terrains for politics.

## **Take Back Control: Marxism and Nature**

**Alex Richardson-Price**

'Take Back Control' was the central slogan of the Leave campaign in the Brexit referendum of 2016, mobilised by the right as a defence of British sovereignty against the European Union. Despite this conservative inflection, many on the left realised that Take

Back Control is not an inherently right-wing slogan. In fact, it is a concept compatible with, and arguably critical to, the emancipatory politics of the class-struggle left.

Taking back control is, in its best sense, at the heart of Marxism. Against the chaos of the market, the imperatives of which exemplify a lack of human control, we propose rational democratic planning. However, there are areas in which the radical left has begun to underappreciate this principle, or even to jettison it. The area where this is most advanced is in our environmental politics, where the threat of climate change has made a belief in controlling nature appear naïve and dangerous. As Raji Steineck puts it, “In the wake of a global ecological storm... Marxist dreams of a technocratic control of nature have gone with the first gusts of wind” .[1]

In eco-politics, then, there is a common sense view that it is precisely human meddling that is problematic, and that the task of radicals is to counter this hubris. I argue that this is an understandable but profoundly mistaken move away from a sound principle in our politics. Contrary to scholarly (and even activist) consensus, there is a remarkably consistent core to the Marxist approach to the environment, binding together sub-traditions as ostensibly divergent as Bolshevik industrialism and the eco-romanticism of William Morris - namely, the aim of maximising conscious control in the natural world - and it is a core we should seek to retain.

[1]Raji Steineck, *Nature - The Shadow of Capital*, Historical Materialism Conference, November 2015, London. Unpublished conference paper. Accessed at [https://www.academia.edu/28321516/Nature-\\_the\\_Shadow\\_of\\_Capital.pdf](https://www.academia.edu/28321516/Nature-_the_Shadow_of_Capital.pdf)

## **The Rise of Legal Food Adulteration: Political Economy and the Cheapening of the Value of Labour-Power**

**Sébastien Rioux (Universit de Montral)**

Growing cases of food adulteration during the past three decades have highlighted the lack of reflection about the theoretical, conceptual and methodological consequences of changing food quality. While issues regarding health, morality and regulations have monopolised most of the comments and interventions about contemporary cases of food adulteration, very little (if anything) has been written about the implications of changing food quality from a political economy perspective. There is indeed a strong tendency within political economy to treat commodities as mere exchange-values abstracted from their physical qualities. This essay maintains that there is a need to understand the quality of food as dynamic and socially mediated, and argues that by taking the qualitative properties of food for granted, political economy tends to overlook and reify important aspects of social reality. It thus emphasises the need to break away from rigid and fixed conceptions of food, and makes the case for a more nuanced social history of changing food consumption and its impacts on livelihoods. As a theoretically and historically informed intervention, this paper is first and foremost an attempt at demonstrating that political economy needs to take the changing qualities of commodities seriously.

# **Working Class Strategy of Reproduction: Reevaluation of Italian Autonomist Marxism**

**Eliasz Robakiewicz (Department of Philosophy University of Warsaw)**

This paper will take as its starting point Robert Brenner's study of the transition from feudalism to capitalism. I will argue that conceptual framework created by Brenner can be used as a complex model of class struggle. Using Brenner's concepts of "social-property relations" and the class-based "strategy of reproduction" as theoretical tools I will try to reevaluate the central notion of Italian autonomist Marxism (Operaismo): the notion of autonomy. Brenner's analysis of the emergence of the capitalist mode of production in England is based on the presumption of an active role of both operating classes in forming their own strategies of reproduction. The end result of class struggle, the interaction between both classes and between them, is neither determined nor intended. The main goal of my analysis is to put into scrutiny the notion of working class control being autonomous rediscovered in late 1950's by Raniero Panzieri using the notion of working class strategy of reproduction. Putting an emphasis on both vertical relations with capital and horizontal relations among workers themselves, I intend to show that the process of reproduction of working class is at the same time within, against and beyond the capital. The main insight of Panzieri was that of capitalist control over the process of production being vertically externalized from the process of socialization of labor left free space for the development of the organization of workers that could replace capital control completely. In the further course of the development of Operaismo, the presumption of vertical separation of capital and labor as the most important tendency of modern capitalism is developed initially in Mario Tronti's and later in Antonio Negri's work. By using Brenner's concept of "strategy of reproduction" I intend to show all dimensions of the working class autonomy opposing these interpretations. Working class strategy should be understood at the same time as struggle or cooperation with capital as well as the almost completely independent sphere of life and action (praised uncritically by Operaismo thinkers).

## **Marx's Capital: Scientifically Erroneous?**

**Michael Roberts (Independent Researcher)**

John Maynard Keynes reckoned Das Kapital was an obsolete economic textbook which I know to be not only scientifically erroneous but without interest or application for the modern world. Marx's work was a poor version of Ricardo and needed to be knocked away. Was Keynes right about this? This paper will consider the logical consistency of Marx's value theory and its empirical relevance to modern capitalist developments. It will deal with the differences of Marx's theory as a critique of political economy to that of Ricardo and Keynes. In particular, the paper will consider the differences between the labour value theory of Ricardo and Marx and the marginalist foundations of Keynes. It will also compare the most important law of political economy, namely Marx's law of the tendency of the rate of profit to fall, to the explanations of changes in profitability offered by Ricardo and Keynes. Empirical evidence will be provided to consider the relevance of Marx's value theory and law of profitability to developments in 21st century capitalism. The paper is divided into four sections. 1. Labour theory of value versus marginal utility 2. Profit is unpaid labour or the marginal productivity of capital 3. Crises: falling profitability and profits; or lack of demand and animal spirits 4. The future: capitalism reformable or transient

## Labours of Love: Women's Work is 'Dark Matter' in the Cultural Sector

Macushla Robinson (The New School University)

Contemporary artist and essayist Hito Steyerl says, apart from domestic and care work art is the industry with the most unpaid labour around. [i] Free labour and rampant exploitation are the invisible dark matter that keeps the culture sector going.[i] This labour, as Steyerl points out, is largely performed by women and is, by its very nature, undocumented. In Australia the work that intimate partners, assistants, supporting curators and women artists themselves so is undervalued against that of their male counterparts. In this paper, I will trace the link between domestic / care work and the un(der)paid labor of women in the art world through the concept of love as a natural resource. I will draw on critiques of capitalism by authors such as sociologist Arlie Hochschild (who conceptualized love as a resource that the first world mines from third world women in the form of care workers, nannies and sex workers); David W. Moore (who sought to collapse the distinction between human and natural labour in *Capitalism in the Web of Life*); and Maria Mies suggestion that women's labor is considered a natural resource, freely available like air and water.[ii] The commodity of love is implicitly gendered, with women assumed greater capacity for love reducing the value that we afford to women artists work. I will study this through the lens of several examples of late 20th century and contemporary artist couples. Many of these couples are, in fact, collaborative teams. However the credit and public recognition goes primarily to the man in such relationships, foregrounding that much art, even revolutionary left wing art, thrives because of the invisible labor of women. [i] Hito Steyerl, *The Politics of Art: Contemporary Art and the Transition to Post-Democracy* in Steyerl, *The Wretched of the Screen*, (New York: Sternberg Press, 2012). 96. [ii] Maria Mies, "Colonization and Housewifization," in *Materialist Feminism: A Reader in Class, Difference, and Womens Lives*, ed. Rosemary Hennessey and Chris Ingraham (Routledge, 1997), 110

## Authoritarian Neoliberalism for Neoliberal Authoritarianism? Limits to Democratisation in Neoliberal Egypt

Roberto Roccu (Kings College London)

Much of the literature on the survival and intensification of neoliberalism in times of crisis focuses on its increasing reliance on various forms of coercion. Less attention has instead been devoted to how the pervasiveness of neoliberalism conditions the prospects of democratic transformation in authoritarian countries. This paper aims to reassess the literature on democratic transitions in light of three global transformations that have come to characterise the neoliberal era and that have hitherto been neglected in the 'transitology' literature. Firstly, financialisation has fundamentally altered the distinction between national and foreign capital and their relation to the state. Secondly, global production networks have affected the position of labour *vis-à-vis* both capital and the state. Thirdly, the hardening of state power captured by authoritarian neoliberalism occurs much earlier in autocracies, as here regime legitimacy crucially depends on the very socio-economic functions of the state dismantled by neoliberalism. Given its trajectory of neoliberal reform, revolution and counterrevolution, Egypt constitutes an

ideal laboratory for exploring the extent to which the lopsided insertion in the global political economy, and its attendant social consequences, might simultaneously constitute a limit to both the hegemony of dominant groups and meaningful democratic transformation.

## **Karl Korsch's Philosophical Breakthrough in Marxism and Philosophy**

### **Darren Roso (Socialist Alternative (Australia))**

Karl Korsch's *Marxism and Philosophy* was a foundational text for Western Marxism. Its contents were presented at the First Marxist Working Week in 1923 as part of a greater regroupment project of German and Hungarian Marxist intellectuals about the philosophy of praxis. No sooner than it was published, its author in effect abandoned its theoretical and political content, its innovative force having evaporated with the lost German October Revolution. As a work of Hegelian-Marxism it was, (as Michael Buckmiller claimed) also a work of the united front tactic as it had developed in the German left at the epoch of the Comintern. After the defeats of the German October, Korsch moved into ultra-left then council communist milieus, progressively becoming more and more isolated from the German workers' movement, an isolation that warped his theoretical constructions and distanced him from his Hegelian-Marxism. His theoretical constructions followed from his new political positioning and his self-diagnosed 'crisis of Marxism'. In the process, he was led from a Hegelian-inspired Marxism back to a variant of neo-Kantianism. Many commentators thus see his theoretical development as a linear and continual growth in insights - hence burying the innovative force of Marxism and Philosophy - however it is more useful to extract the the rational kernel of Marxism and Philosophy than postulate a mythical vision of logical progression which landed him at a neo-Kantian impasse.

## **What is Financialisation and how Could it be Explained? The Case of South Korean Housing Financialisation**

### **Hongseok Ryu (SOAS, University of London)**

This article aims to define financialisation of housing and establish new methodology for it. For this it deals with financialisation of housing in South Korea. It reviews given definitions of financialisation in literature of three different areas: (1) financialisation in general, (2) financialisation of housing in general, and (3) financialisation of housing in South Korea. The review covers scope, object, and form of each financialisation. By doing so, it gets various perception of the concept and arranges them to establish proper one. Then, (4) it reviews methodologies of housing financialisation and suggests alternative one. (1) Financialisation presents increase of selling and buying of financial commodities immediately. Securitization of debt has become an axis of financial circulation of value. The quantitative increase comes together the qualitative change in financial commodities. The increase of lending is supported by the bond market and the bond market runs on assumption of increase of lending. Two new features of financialisation depend on one another. (2) The form of financialisation of housing is identical to each national economy. The literature of financialisation of housing shows that the form of the financialisation depends on the given situation of national economy. It reviews representative literature on different form of financialisation of housing and extracts main factors to decide the form of financialisation of housing. This article narrows its survey on the difference of



financialisation of housing in different economic context. (3) This article specifies logical relations on financialisation of housing. It does not contain general reason of financialisation of housing but could find specific reasons of economic entities to agree and act on the housing financialisation in South Korea. It does not uncover the general mechanism to firm forms of housing financialisation but present a particular form of South Korean housing financialisation. (4) Methodology: it reviews literature on housing financialisation, and then suggests alternative methodology to survey it. The existing methodologies are categorised into between agent-methodology and systemic methodology. The alternative one is of the latter. However, it contains advantages of two systemic methodologies; class-based analysis and system of provision as well as overcome the weaknesses of them.

## **Subsumption and Violence**

**Andres Saenz De Sicilia (Roehampton University)**

A number of recent attempts to theorise social domination have alighted on the concept of subsumption as key to conceptualising contemporary power. Rejecting the thesis of a total subsumption of the lifeworld, proposed most infamously in the work of Negri and Adorno, these approaches have called for a more nuanced approach to the analysis of capitalist oppression. Remaining closer to the letter of Marx's texts, they argue for a deflationary reading of subsumption that limits the analytic scope of the concept to the capitalist production process. Whilst appealing as a polemical riposte to the total subsumption thesis, these accounts nonetheless leave important questions unanswered. Namely, how to theorise those forms of domination that occur outside of capitalist production, and furthermore, how to integrate an understanding of this extra-economic exercise of power with the analysis of capitalist valorisation. The question of violence is illustrative in this respect. Violence traverses production and its outside, acting upon bodies in a manner often indifferent to the distinction, as is particularly evident in underdeveloped regions of the globe. In order to render the relation between violence and capitalist accumulation intelligible, this paper proposes a social ontology grounded in reproduction, drawing on the work of Bolívar Echeverría. Reproduction acts as a transcendental of the social and both subsumption to capital and violence can only be understood in their fullness in relation to the structure and process of social reproduction within which they occur. Crucially however, this relation is bilateral, in that violence and subsumption to capital also make this reproductive schema possible (as I will show with reference to René Girard and Roderick Campbell as well as Marx). The ontology of reproduction proposed here opens the possibility of a unitary, rather than fragmentary or reductive account of domination that connects higher level abstractions with detailed empirical work, thus offering a compelling framework through which to pursue critical social research.

## **Egypt's 2011 Revolution: Authoritarian Neoliberalism and Popular Resistance**

**Sara Salem (University of Warwick)**

The Middle East and North Africa have long been a focus of the political science literature. Much of the literature on politics in the Middle East not only designates the region as especially conducive to authoritarian rule, but also sees neoliberalism as an antidote to authoritarianism, rather than as part and parcel of authoritarianism itself. This paper argues that the past few decades has seen the convergence of neoliberalism and authoritarianism, and that this convergence resulted in the 2011 revolution. I focus on the dramatic economic

changes that took place in the years leading up to 2011, and in particular the emergence of a new group of capitalists within Egypt's ruling class that were quickly able to become dominant. This group implemented a series of reforms that can be understood through the lens of accelerated neoliberalization, which greatly transformed Egypt's economy. Given their tendency to rely on coercion at the expense of creating consent within either the ruling class or other key groups, this group also represented a new phase of authoritarianism in Egypt that was ultimately more severe. It was after their emergence that the balance between consent and coercion—always fluid and dynamic—shifted precariously towards the coercion side of the equation, resulting, ultimately, in a breakdown of hegemony and the outbreak of the 2011 revolution. I focus on both of these processes: the destruction of the tenuous balance between political stability and capital accumulation that had existed previously, and the forms of resistance that emerged to counter this, most significantly the 2011 revolution.

## **The (mis)uses of Womens Rights: A Plenary on Sara Farris's 'In the Name of Womens Rights**

**Sara Salem, Lisa Tilley, Rafeef Ziadah, Akanksha Mehta, Ashley Bohrer, Nayda Ali, Sara Farris**

The (mis)uses of womens rights in the name of furthering imperial and racist projects is nothing new; as a project it has spanned over four hundred years and has been deployed by many different actors, often in contradictory ways. Despite this continuity, the particular ways in which it has been deployed; the ends it has been deployed towards; and the range of actors involved, have changed over time. Our current political moment is witnessing a global deepening of racist, imperialist, and right-wing nationalist forces. It is this context in which the continuing use of womens rights needs to be addressed, analysed, and understood. Sara Farris book *In the Name of Womens Rights: The Rise of Femonationalism* (Duke University Press, 2017) examines the demands for women's rights from an unlikely collection of right-wing nationalist political parties, neoliberals, and some feminist theorists and policy makers. Farris focuses on France, the Netherlands and Italy in order to show the exploitation and co-optation of feminist themes by anti-Islam and xenophobic campaigns, which she terms femonationalism. She shows that by characterizing Muslim males as dangerous to western societies and as oppressors of women, and by emphasizing the need to rescue Muslim and migrant women, these groups use gender equality to justify their racist rhetoric and policies. This is a timely intervention in a long-standing debate. The aim of this symposium is to both critically engage with Farris book, as well as to extend the discussion to other geographical locations. What are the contemporary articulations of feminism and racism globally? How does neoliberalism constitute the context in which these articulations play out? In what ways can these articulations be resisted? And how are feminists implicated in these very processes, in contradictory ways?

## **Generation Debt: the Student Movement, Apathy and Neoliberalism**

**Zoe Salanintro**

It has been twenty years since university tuition fees were introduced by New Labour. Tuition fees are now in excess of 9,000 per year for Home/EU undergraduates and means-

tested maintenance grants have been scrapped in favour of more loans. Students are graduating university with more than 50,000 of debt and their prospects are, for the first time since the second world war, worse than the generation that preceded them. Neoliberal policies in the Higher Education Sector and in wider society has caused a shift in the way students perceive university and the role they should play in the university community and in society. A survey conducted by the National Union of Students shows that the amount of alcohol and drugs students are consuming have dropped significantly since 2012 whilst depression and anxiety among students is at an all time high. With students taking on so much personal debt to pursue university, education becomes an investment in human capital, or a commodity students purchase on the marketplace, rather than a tool-kit to liberate and expand horizons. These changes inevitably position university staff as service providers rather than collaborators in higher learning and isolates and alienates students as individual consumers buying a university experience rather than part of a community or a movement, let alone a class. There have been attempts at resistance against the neoliberal tide from student cooperatives to student supporting for worker struggles on campus such as those involving cleaning staff. The panel will therefore explore the causes of student apathy, the creation of a consumer and audit culture in higher education and resistance to it, and consider whether this student subjectivity is a recent development, caused in part by the introduction of tuition fees, or a feature present throughout the history of the British student movement. The panel will also examine whether there is sufficient student power to fight back against the neoliberalisation of universities, and ask whether there are any aspects of neoliberalisation that can be appropriated and turned against managers and the government. Hitherto a largely neglected field of research, students offer a fruitful and engaging case-study in the ability of social movements to challenge capital. By engaging with this undervalued field including movements origins, contradictions, and potential this panel will offer important conclusions for the political activity of a new generation of activists and militant intellectuals.

## **Restriction and Criminalization of Social Movements Through Juridical Interpretation: How a Deformalized Law Opens Spaces to Neoliberal Interests**

**Lara B. Santanna (University of Coimbra)**

Social movements and the state have a two-way relationship: on one side, social movements are always questioning the state's legal rules, pushing the boundaries of the system; on the other side, the state reacts to this pressure by trying to restrict its action through criminalization, but also by conceding to some social movements through recognition and the institutionalization of their demands; transforming them into rights. Even though law can be an expression of the dominant class, it is also a space where commitments are made with the oppressed class, due to class struggle. And since the background of this work is not restricted to any institutional or teleological view, these struggles for recognition and political change are seen as expressions of democracy, which constructs its own meaning within these processes. In the institutional level, however, state apparatus must be bound to law; what has been achieved through struggle. This is an important feature of a democratic system. However, if these "codified commitments" are constructed in such an abstract and vague way, or even if they become weakened through interpretation (from the administration or judiciary), one can question whether such laws/concessions are actually able to hold on. That is one of the main concerns that drives this work, which through a case analysis intends to show how economical interests find in this process of deformalization of the law a way to succeed through the state apparatus; raising restrictions and criminalizing social movements both through content and interpretation.

# Does Montage Aesthetics Have Revolutionary Potential in Anti-Capitalist Struggles?

Irina Samokovska (Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski")

This paper seeks to examine the political potential of montage for leftist struggles. I examine theory devoted to the role of the fragment, including the Russian montage school (Eisenstein, Vertov), Walter Benjamin, Dada artists and post dramatic theatre (plays by Heiner Mueller). Asked to comment on his avant-garde works in an interview, East German dramatist Heiner Mueller rejected the question on the grounds of this being a purely capitalist concept. I take up this argument to see whether the political potential of avant-garde in theory and practice in the field of leftist struggles has been thoroughly exhausted, with revolutionary agendas inevitably ending up within the institutions they criticized and generating value for them, or whether they contain lines of flight which prevent their indexation by the market. I seek to outline the role of fragment in a historical perspective and to conclude whether it can still be used to intervene into current neoliberal realities so as to break up hegemonic interpretations and generate new articulations of socially meaningful problems. I also try to find out how it can act as artistic critique which is strong enough to trigger transformations both in the fields of production and reception and to mobilize followers to take up the practice. Apart from exploring the emancipatory potential of montage aesthetics, this paper also points out some of the disadvantages of this approach, including the level of complexity it often presupposes. On the one hand, as some of the authors insist, if art strives to function politically, to create a new disruptive language, the good intentions of the creators will not suffice. Unless artworks are up to certain technical standards, they will be easily appropriable for propaganda purposes, serving the interests of the status quo. On the other hand, this complexity is bound to speak to the masses it seeks to liberate from an elevated position.

## The Commodity Spectrum

Jeanne Anne Schuler (Creighton University), Patrick Murray

Capital begins with the observation that, in societies where it is produced on a capitalist basis, wealth takes the social form of the commodity. As value, a commodity is a fetish: A commodity appears at first sight an extremely obvious, trivial thing. But its analysis brings out that it is a very strange thing, abounding in metaphysical subtleties and theological niceties (163). The simple commodity of the beginning of Capital is not simple; it turns out to be commodity capital, pregnant with surplus-value. Drawing on Veblen's conception of wealth as an honor fetish, Jean Baudrillard made the conception of the commodity as a use-value with an exchange value more complex by including sign value. But wealth trades as a commodity only temporarily and with qualifications as it circulates and goes out of circulation and sometimes back in. What we purchase generally becomes and may remain an ex-commodity. Purchases that fill our home or surround us at work are enjoyed or used productively; they are not up for sale. Marx must have chuckled when observing that commodities in the making are not handled within a firm as commodities: the next worker in the process neither buys nor sells what she's working on. Many market participants are firms, some not-for-profit, most for-profit; commodities produced by not-for-profits differ from those produced by for-profits in that their sale does not yield surplus value. We may wonder how much difference that makes. Wealth not on the market is not separable from social form. We recognize the value of products in the private sphere of consumption or while working in a firm or factory. This recognition is made explicit when we list and price our valuables for a homeowners insurance policy or when inventory is taken on the job.

Privileged consumers buy commodities for domestic use, say a home, jewelry, or fine art, knowing that such wealth doubles as a store of value or even speculating that its value will increase. Value is strange, but we do not need a theory to perceive its presence around us. Like gravity before Newton, value surrounds us, as familiar as it is mysterious. Quasi-commodities of various sorts involve more than being willing and able to pay the price. Being willing to pay tuition at Princeton is not enough; one must first be admitted. Paying tuition gets you a seat in a class but does not guarantee any credit hours: you have to pass the course. Commodities are strange by virtue of their social form, but pressures to commodify creates strange commodities.

## **Paul Levi, Social Democracy and Socialist Politics and Economics, 1923 to 1929**

### **Jörn Schütrumpf**

This paper will delineate the trajectory of Paul Levi, one of Luxemburg's closest political associates, following his expulsion from the German Communist Party in the early 1920s. Levi's unfulfilled effort to maintain a political space in the German workers' movement for a perspective informed by Luxemburg's insights will be examined in terms of its lessons for contemporary discussions of renewing socialist democracy.

## **Sexualities in Permanent Revolution**

### **Alan Sears (Ryerson University)**

There have been significant changes in gender and sexuality over the period since the 1960s, including augmented (though still highly inadequate) access to contraception and abortion, a higher cultural profile for sexualities, and improvements in the formal rights of women, lesbians, gays and (to a lesser extent) transpeople. These changes are substantial enough that they are commonly referred to as the sexual revolution. While this sexual revolution since the 1960s has made a real difference in the lives of many, queer, anti-racist and other critics point out that the dominant regime of sex and gender normativity has been reformed but not overturned. This paper will take the term sexual revolution back to its origins in the social insurgency of the early 20th century. Wilhelm Reich was one among many who developed conceptions of sexual revolution in the period from the 1890s-1930s. These sex radicals tended to see sex and gender liberation as important, and often missing, dimensions in broader struggles for revolutionary emancipation. Black feminist and other radical voices from feminist, anti-racist, ecological and anti-colonial struggles through the 20th century challenged and expanded these conceptions of freedom. In this paper, I will build on Peter Drucker's analysis of combined and uneven sexual development, that provides important resources for understanding sexualities on a global scale neither as a single system of modernization nor as a set of separate systems, each with their own dynamics. Trotsky conceived of permanent revolution as the necessary approach to emancipation in conditions of combined and uneven development. Global sex and gender liberation is not a question of development through stages to the highest level of freedom represented by white bourgeois men in the Global North since the 1960s. Rather it requires a process of revolutionary struggles radiating northwards and southwards, with an orientation to decolonizing, anti-racism, feminism, queering and ecological sustainability as well as collective and democratic control over the means of life-making.

## **The Struggle for Development**

### **Benjamin Selwyn (University of Sussex)**

The world economy is expanding rapidly despite chronic economic crises. Yet the majority of the world's population live in poverty. Why are wealth and poverty two sides of the coin of capitalist development? What can be done to overcome this destructive dynamic? In this contribution Benjamin Selwyn shows how capitalism generates widespread poverty, gender discrimination and environmental destruction. He debunks the World Bank's dollar-a-day methodology for calculating poverty, arguing that the proliferation of global supply chains is based on the labour of impoverished women workers and environmental ruin. Development theories from neoliberal to statist and even various strands of Marxism are revealed as justifying and promoting labouring class exploitation despite their pro-poor rhetoric. Selwyn also offers an alternative in the form of labour-led development, which shows how collective actions by labouring classes whether South African shack-dwellers and miners, East Asian and Indian Industrial workers, or Latin American landless labourers and unemployed workers can and do generate new forms of human development. The talk concludes by outlining a manifesto for democratic socialist development.

## **Bogdanov's Return and Contemporary Marxian Critique of Global Political Economy**

### **Orsan Senalp (Networked Labour), Mehmet Gursan Senalp (Atilim University, Ankara)**

**Abstract** The third generation Marxian critique of global political economy, of capitalism and imperialism, had been developed during the second half of the 20th century within the framework of Western academic discussions, thus outside the party lines of official Marxist orthodoxy. It has been following the lines drawn by the Frankfurt School, Dependency critic of Development and Modernization theories, as well as the contributions by Annales School of History and Althusser's (and others) readings of Gramsci between the 1950s and 70s. Synthesising these theories with the Systems Analytic approach of Ilya Prigogine, a follower of Ludwig Von Bertalanffy's General Systems Theory, Immanuel Wallerstein delivered the first volume of his magnum opus the Capitalist World System in 1974; providing the most profound and comprehensive historical study of the development of capitalism to that day. Since the first introduction of the WST it is possible to trace a continuum between the third generation theories and the most recent contemporary debates (the fourth generation) on globalisation, transnationalisation, new imperialism, empire, financialisation, informationalisation, digitalisation etc. Contributing to the theorisation of dominating aspects of evolving capitalism at the turn of the new millennium, the contemporary Marxian critique presents a comprehensive and complementary spectrum of systemic studies analysing the rise, arrival, expansion, transformation and possible demise of the capitalist world order. The paper however problematizes a time lapse and the missing link between the second and third generation theories, the latter arriving 40-50 years after the second generation (Kautsky, Luxemburg, Hilferding, Bukharin, Lenin, Trotsky, Sultan-Galiev and others), whose impact reaches till today. Critical of and distant from official and doctrinaire reproductions of verities of State Monopoly Capitalism theories of communist and socialist parties, the renewal of the Marxian analyses of capitalist world economy in the second half of the last century clearly influenced by the rediscovery of Gramsci's prison writings on the one hand, and by the reconstruction of the Western Academia by Structuralism and new paradigm of Systems sciences on the other. The paper identifies that Alexander Bogdanov and his work was the missing link, which pioneered both Gramsci's

original formulations of culture, ideology, and hegemony, and the general systems thinking. The fact that it was absent for the Western Marxism in the second half of the 20th century constitutes a remarkable gap. Bogdanov was one of the most important political figures in the history of Russian Revolution, who developed the most elaborate critic of the orthodoxy and its economistic readings of Marx, and also Materialism and Dialectics as developed by Marx, Engels, and Dietzen; and whose magnum opus Tektology being accepted as the forerunner (forming a counter pole) of the General Systems Theory, Cybernetics, Operational Research, and structuralism. Therefore, the paper argues further, that filling such a gap by rethinking of existing critique of global political economy, from a Tektological point of view, is an urgent task.

## **The Substance of Symbolic Value: Museums, Collections, and the Appearance of Value in Art**

**Nizan Shaked (California State University Long Beach)**

Despite recent fluctuations, the market for contemporary art has increased incrementally since the late 20th century, and has been at an all time historic high since the beginning of the 21st century. Art institutions are intertwined in this trend, with record numbers of new museums dedicated to contemporary art opening across the globe, and established universal survey museums turning over more resources to exhibit and collect the current. Yet, while historical artworks and collectibles have inheritance and rarity to guarantee their worth, what is it, beyond the market, that can insure the prices of contemporary art? Although art prices are determined on the market (auction houses, galleries, fairs, and other formats of art dealing), this paper makes the claim that the network of museums, nonprofit art spaces, and alternative spaces are a necessary condition in facilitating the market. I focus on collecting institutions, arguing that it is the unit of "the collection" that guarantees the symbolic value of art, giving it the power to siphon and hold objectified abstract labor. This paper will use recent work on the value of art, with that of Diane Elson and Ann E. Davis, to describe the interaction between symbolic and monetary value and theorize its historical specificity in relation to the establishment of money as a general equivalent. Particularly, I ask: what was the substance of an object's worth during the development of European mercantilism, how is it different under capitalism, has the monetization and financialization of art affected its flow, and what are the implications for the art institution today?

## **Immigrant Labour in Japan: Class, Gender and Ethnicity**

**Mariana Shinohara Roncato (University of Sophia/Japan  
Universidade Estadual de Campinas/Brazil)**

This paper aims to analyze the Brazilians immigrant labor in Japan, known as dekasseguis and their transversalities, what means: how is the dynamic between class, ethnicity and gender in Japanese society. For decades, Japan has been experiencing a "demographic problem" with the lack of workforce population as a result of population aging and nation's declining birth rate (as women's reproductive choices), and becoming a barrier for its capitalist development. In this context, importing the immigrant cheap labor became not subject to controversy an attractive option. Manufacturing industry, construction and care work are the economic sectors where they are most represented. Those non-skilled

immigrants, coming not only from Brazil, but also from other countries in East Asia and South America have a lack of civil and political rights, more precarious working conditions and earning much less than national working class. The racialization, in addition to the already existing strong gender division of labor in Japan becomes constitutive of working-class and a deliberate social policy, despite of official discourse, and although the sex and race blind interpretations of dynamics of the capitalist mode of production. The dekassegui woman, by her time, earns about 30% less than her male compatriot, has a higher probability to be fired as well as counts with less social security. Their lower cost of social reproduction became extremely functional to extract more surplus value, but not only, this process also has been following by decline of wages and deteriorating the working conditions of the national working class itself. In other words, in the migratory process, these workers as part of a global reserve army of labor play the role in regulate the price of labor and expanding precarious jobs for all society. We understand immigrants as an inexhaustible reservoir of disposable labor-power in Marx's words and an important element of capitalist law of population. In this process, the exaltation of differences such as race, gender and ethnical transversalities it's not a marginal issue of capital accumulation, but the intrinsic part of global social reproduction. For this reason, the racist state, xenophobia, oppression and discrimination in these countries aims to increase the exploration-domination of these immigrant workers. The intercrossing of the social relation of class, race/ethnicity and gender tends to reinforce the contradictions of each part of those social relations, and of course, having a great impact of their life conditions.

## **The National Democratic Revolution and Capitalism in South Africa**

### **Nyiko Floyd Shivambu (Economic Freedom Fights (EFF))**

The African National Congress and the National Liberation Movement it led during the struggle for political inclusion, national liberation, overthrow of apartheid-cum-apartheid domination and/or revolutionary change of South African society have since 1912 experienced various ideological and political dispositions, which to a certain degree shaped and influenced its politics in every conjuncture of the struggle. Amongst these dispositions is the National Democratic Revolution, which despite its Marxist-Leninist origins, came to mean different things to different people within and outside the Liberation Movement. NDR has in the recent past or even earlier been theorised and/or accepted as the shortest route to socialism (SACP, 1962); dialectical resolution of the class, gender and national contradictions (COSATU, 2007); non-capitalist or socialist orientated transition in SA (Netshitendzhe 2006); management of capitalism and the contradictions that arise thereof (ANC NWC 2006); liberation of Africans in particular and blacks in general; resolution of national grievance (ANC, 1997, 2002); etc. The concept of NDR has been so elastic, and as a result dwindled into political insignificance and incoherence. This however does not prevent a thorough discussion of the NDR and how the ANC came to believe it is in a national democratic revolution. As government, the ANC-led National Liberation Movement whose main theoretical and ideological tools of analysis and guide to action was centred on the NDR, could not give practical meaning on what this mean for a post colonial-cum-apartheid South Africa. This opened space to the introduction of various ideological streams, including the conception of two nations as a political and ideological attempt to define South Africa's inequalities and what is to be done in the late 1990s. The concept of a developmental state was therefore revoked and posited in the early to mid 2000 as a means to address the challenges confronting what was misconstrued as the 2nd of the two nations identified. This perspective will discuss the main theoretical and strategic parameters of the NDR and then critically analyse how it has been employed to locate, explain and defend



the idea of a developmental state in the context of the two nations thesis. In this discussion, the essay will argue that the ANC led National Liberation Movements misconception of the NDR, misconstruction of development in the developmental State and wrong characterisation of South Africa's inequalities as two nations deprived South Africa of an opportunity to adopt and implement a radical socio-economic redistribution programme. In response to the question of whether a capitalist class formation is a sine qua non (pre-requisite) of radical socio-economic redistribution in South Africa, the essay will emphatically argue that no it is not a sine qua non. Capitalist class formation instead has become a hindrance to what could have otherwise been thoroughgoing socio economic redistribution, which amongst other things entails deconstruction of the Minerals Energy Complex.

## **The Antiwar and the War Veterans Movements in Greece 1920-26**

**Kostas Skordoulis (National & Kapodistrian University of Athens)**

This paper presents an assessment of the antiwar movement initiated by communist soldiers in the Greek army during Greece's campaign in Asia Minor in the years 1920-22 followed by the movement of the war veterans organized in mainland Greece after the defeat of the army, in the years 1923-26. These movements, inspired by the events of the October Revolution, were instrumental in the recruitment of a new generation of young militants in the ranks of the newly born Communist Party of Greece (KKE) strengthening its presence in the central political scene. An account and assessment will be given of the manifesto War against the war written by Pandelis Pouliopoulos (1900-1943), one of the central figures of these movements, who later became the Secretary of the Communist Party (in 1927). The influence of the war veterans movement in the radicalization of the Communist Party of Greece in its first phase will be discussed.

## **Ambivalent Views from Central Europe: Rudolf Hilferding, Otto Bauers, and the Russian Revolutions of 1917**

**William Smaldone (Department of History Willamette University)**

During the first three decades of the twentieth century, Rudolf Hilferding (1877-1941) and Otto Bauer (1881-1938) were two of Europe's Social Democracy's most important intellectual and political leaders. Both men initially joined the Austrian Social Democratic Party, in which they became leading exponents of what historians call the Austro-Marxist School, but in the decade prior to the First World War Hilferding moved to Germany, while Bauer remained in his homeland. Drafted for military service early in the war, they returned to their respective countries in the revolutionary wave that began in Russia and which then swept away the German and Austro-Hungarian Empires. Each became a key figure in the revolutionary events of 1918 and 1919 and in the construction of the new German and Austrian Republics. Bauer became the de facto leader of Austrian Social Democracy and played a decisive role in its efforts to remain united and control events in truncated Austria. Hilferding became a leading figure in the Independent Social Democratic Party of Germany, which had broken with the German Social Democratic Party after its leadership had backed the government's war effort in 1914. This paper examines their evolving views on the

Russian Revolutions of 1917 and on the latter's impacts on their respective countries. It aims to shed light on how their ideas, rooted in the Austrian political milieu of the pre-1914 era, influenced their actions as leaders of the socialist left at a time of political and social upheaval.

## **Technological Change in Contemporary Capitalism: A Symptom of Disease Rather Than A Cure**

**Tony Smith (Iowa State University)**

Innovation is a critical weapon in competition among capitalist firms. In previous periods of world history, regions where technological revolutions were centered enjoyed competitive advantages in the world market for decades. Not coincidentally, these regions enjoyed golden ages, with high profit rates, high rates of investment, low unemployment, increasing real wages and a generalized rise in living standards. In the present historical period, there has been an unprecedented proliferation of reasonably effective national innovation systems. As a result, the time units of capital can enjoy a competitive advantage from innovation necessarily tends to be significantly compressed. The hope shared across the mainstream political spectrum that some new technological revolution will set off a new period of healthy capitalist growth is therefore a delusion. There will be no more golden ages of capitalist development. In this new period of world history, when technological change no longer contributes to capitalist growth the way it has in previous epochs, other ways of increasing profits must be sought. The paper argues that many developments in recent decades studied by critical social scientists—the lower share of labor in GDP, expansion of monopoly rents from intellectual property rights, heightened role of financial engineering, explosion of household debt, increasingly blatant political corruption, and so on—must be understood in this context. The paper concludes with a discussion of some implications of this account for the major theories of justice defended by normative social philosophers.

## **Forging an Anti-Capitalist Film Culture: Ken Loach and the Debate about Naturalism in Britain**

**Marcos Soares (University of Sao Paulo)**

After the resounding victory of Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher in the 1980's and the worldwide rightward shift that would dominate the next two decades, cultural critic Fredric Jameson famously claimed that one of the main features of the "culture of globalization" was its resistance against totalization of the "older types". The academic discussion that issued about the hegemony of postmodern culture did not, however, relegate "older forms of political art" to the trashcan of History, as might have been expected. The beginning of the 21st century and of the crises that have punctuated the last decade has seen the resurgence of the work of committed filmmakers such as Ken Loach, whose "I, Daniel Blake" (2016) gives a new twist to the question of the "invisibility" of the "culture of finance capital" by looking at it from the standpoint of contemporary strategies that capitalism needs to resort to in order to survive. This presentation intends to look at Ken Loach's body of work as a continuation and a new inflection to the debate about Naturalist and committed art in Britain. I will claim that, as far as the work of Ken Loach is concerned, this discussion has its origins in the culture of the British New Left, reaching a new level of interpretative strength in Raymond Williams's contribution to the debate about Naturalist theatre and its possible influence on the work of a new generation of filmmakers working for the BBC at the end of the 1960's. This presentation will then

look at the ways in which Loach has contributed to the development of a political type of filmmaking that found new solutions to the limits reached by his colleagues of the "British New Wave" of the 1960's-70's and that over more than 50 years have helped to usefully forge an anti-capitalist form of film culture.

## **Calumny Fetishism: The Origins and Obscurantism of the Concept of Vulgar Marxism**

**David Sockol (Drew University)**

Antonio Gramsci's famous claims that the Bolsheviks were not Marxists and that their October Revolution was a revolution against Karl Marx's Capital were striking calumnies. When viewed in isolation, it would appear self-evident that Gramsci intended these as attacks upon the Bolsheviks and their Revolution. When considered in light of the history of Marxist thought, however, their true meaning and targets become clear. Gramsci's claims were part of a wider campaign among supporters of the October Revolution including both Leninists and pioneers of Western Marxism against its critics within the former Second International. Faced with the fact that figures long proclaimed as authorities on Marxist theory, such as Karl Kautsky and Georgi Plekhanov, declined to support October, Gramsci, along with Vladimir Lenin, Leon Trotsky, Georg Lukacs, and Karl Korsch, argued that this and other perceived failings were due to the flawed nature of the Marxism of the Second International. Employing selective quotations and specious generalizations, the supporters of October flattened the dynamic Marxism of the Second International into a monolithic vulgar Marxism, portraying it as beholden to a fatalistic materialism exalting schematized conceptions of economic development uncritically adopted from Marx's writings that ignored the importance of non-economic phenomena in society and supported a purely reformist political programme. It was these caricatured Marxists and their purported interpretation of Capital that Gramsci referred to in his statements regarding the Bolsheviks and the October Revolution, politically motivated and ultimately calumnious statements contributing to the widespread misrepresentation and misunderstanding of Second International Marxism that continues to this day. This paper will not only examine this process whereby twentieth-century Marxists came to portray the theories of the Second International as vulgar Marxism, it will also consider what this obscures about the thought of prominent Marxists and the history of Marxism as a whole. Central to this will be a survey of the approach to culture, specifically art and aesthetics, within the writings of Georgi Plekhanov, one of the founders of the Russian Marxist movement and among the most prominent theoreticians of the Second International. Contrary to the vulgar stereotype affixed to him, Plekhanov's writings reveal a sensitivity to the influence that cultural phenomena can exert upon socio-political processes and a commitment to revolutionary politics. Recognizing that bourgeois culture could retard revolutionary consciousness, Plekhanov called for politically committed interventions by class-conscious intellectuals and artists aimed at revolutionary goals. Thus anticipating both the concerns of many Western Marxists and the strategy of the Bolsheviks, Plekhanov's work indicates the continuity that exists between not only the Leninist and Western Marxisms of the twentieth century, but also between these and the Marxism of the Second International. As such, it forces the conclusion that the political strategies of these ostensibly separate schools emerged from a fundamentally similar theoretical basis and prevents the exclusion of any particular path for committed Marxists. With reformism, voluntarism, and quietism therefore all viable praxes for Marxists, the prospects and perils of each, as illustrated by history, must be considered.

## **Rethinking Dual Power**

**Panagiotis Sotiris (independent researcher)**

Dual power as a strategic concept plays a central role in the conceptualization of the revolutionary situation in Russia during 1917, both in the sense of the characterization of a particular conjuncture as revolutionary, but also as strategic direction, acquiring after October 1917 canonical status. Despite, the fact that revolutionary sequences that followed, either defeated, such as in the case of the first wave of insurrection in the immediate aftermath of the October Revolution, or later victorious, such as the case of the Chinese Revolution, present more complex paths towards political power, it continued to play this role of a central reference point. This can explain its use in later debates in Latin America but also Europe, as a crucial factor determining a revolutionary or potentially revolutionary situation. Although associated with a classical insurrectionary sequence, later discussions of dual power placed more emphasis on the more complex, uneven and lasting character of any potentially revolutionary strategy, from Gramsci's distinction between war of movement and war of position to the debates on strategy in the 1970s. Recently, discussions of dual power have resurfaced in the context of the debates on the contradictions of contemporary attempts towards some form of left governance, but also in interventions by theorists such as Fredric Jameson. The aim of this presentation is to return to crucial moments of these debates in order to suggest it is necessary to move beyond thinking about dual power of either a typology of insurrectionary sequences or the simple articulation of parliamentary majority and movements from below. In such a perspective dual power refers to the necessary contradictory coexistence between antagonistic social relations, political forms and practices of politics in any process of social transformation, before and after taking power, and it cannot be limited in the opposition between antagonistic forms of political organization. Moreover, it should also be thought the liberation of collective practices and experimentation, the enhancement of forms of collective ingenuity, the emergence of alternative productive forms and social configurations. In this sense, instead of limiting it to the particular conjuncture of a revolutionary situation, it is better to think of a permanent dual power as an integral aspect of any potentially revolutionary strategy, or as a permanent trait of any politics of emancipation. In such a perspective dual power includes not only the emergence of antagonistic forms of democratic power from below, but also the collective effort to elaborate, implement and reproduce social forms that are antagonistic to the value form, the market and dominant forms of social reproduction, the permanent cultural revolution necessary for such an attempt, and the new practice of politics that can enable such an attempt towards a new historical bloc.

## **Text and Context in the History of Ideas: A Marxist Alternative to the Skinnerian Canon**

**George Souvlis (European University Institute), Nicolai Von Eggers (European University Institute)**

For decades, intellectual history has been methodologically dominated the work of Quentin Skinner emphasizing the reading of text in light of their discursive contexts. For all its achievements, this approach has tended to neglect and therefore obfuscate the social relations and concrete political struggles that form the background of the production of the text and which also form the reality into which the text tries to intervene. The key questions therefore become: What should we understand by 'context'? And: what is the relation between text and context?

In this paper, we try to synthesize different approaches to intellectual history in order to answer these questions. More concretely we criticize the work of Skinner by way of a discussion the work of Neal and Ellen Wood and Louis Althusser as well as developments within global intellectual history on cultural transfer and, via Gramsci, a broadening of the perspective on who counts as an intellectual for the intellectual historian.

From a Marxist perspective, these writers each understand context in separate ways that taking individually might be deficient but which may complement one another in the study of historical texts. Thus, Wood and Wood have rightly emphasized that the social context should be taken into consideration, yet their understanding of the social context often tend to be too generic or general when working with everything but the most canonical text. Similarly, Althusser has emphasized the context of the conjuncture (the political situation), yet his understanding of the conjuncture tends to overlook the concrete social relations that are also part of concrete struggles and disagreements. Finally, a global and Gramscian approach to intellectual history will make the context less one of internal discussion between great philosophers and more of a bottom-up perspective looking at how ideas form and travel in relation to concrete struggles of everyday lives. This is especially important for intellectual history of the modern period where technologies, infrastructure and forms of socialization make ideas travel in other ways than those of the early modern period, which, perhaps unconsciously, is what structures Skinner's methodology.

By synthesizing these different approaches, it is our aim to mark the path for a Marxist approach to intellectual history that stays clear of economistic reductionism on the one side and discursive reductionism *à la* Skinner on the other.

## **Waves in the Lake: Tamil Migrants and Nationalism in Malaya and Ceylon**

**Siddharth Sridhar (The University of Texas at Austin, MA student in Department of Asian Studies)**

As more countries fall into the fiery embrace of nationalism, it becomes ever more important to uncover the hidden histories of nations and national ideologies. The current wave of nationalist fervor in Europe and North America follows on the heels of mass migration, as citizens of the West demand control over borders and over the nation. This essay examines the 20th century national movements in Ceylon and Malaysia where the ethnoscape of Tamil speaking migrant laborers brushed up against Sinhala and Malay elite political imaginations. These ethnoscaples collide in a larger web of British colonial governmentality and imperial capital inflecting one another in myriad ways contributing to the production of the modern Indian Ocean world of borders and border controls. Starting with Arjun Appadurais Disjuncture and Difference and Benedict Andersons Imagined Communities, the paper explores the role of mobilities and the restriction of mobility in the production of a territorialized nation. How does the Malayan peninsula or the island of Ceylon become the natural home of the Malay or Sinhala nation-state? Here it may help to relate the concept of the imagined political community to the notion of territoriality as expressed in Ranajit Guhas Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India. The question ultimately is whether a primordial connection between a constructed polity

and a physical territory exists outside of material structures such as the system of plantations, finance, and empire that linked together Thanjavur, Kandy, and Penang. This also brings us back to The National Question and the question of agency in the instigation of revolution against capital. In multi-ethnic colonial territories such as 20th century Malaya, Ceylon, and the behemoth of the Raj, anti-colonial nationalists arose out of a civil society embedded in reactionary social hierarchy and imperial capital. As bourgeois formations they pushed for superficial transformations that fell distinctly short of a radical transformative politics. Building a model of the oceanic plantation finance system and British imperial governance helps draw out commonalities between the bourgeois nationalist movements that emerged in the early 20th century Bay of Bengal. At the same time the importance of immigration controls to both movements points to a developing consensus on governmentality emerging in this period of late imperialism. This paper thus places mobilities, of people, ideas, and capital, at the center of historical change in the late imperial Indian Ocean. Ultimately, the history of anti-colonial and anti-migrant nationalism in this region offers us insights into reactionary populisms of the present day as they spread across the globe.

## **From Colonial Empire to European Periphery: An Analysis of the Social Forces behind Portugal's Integration with Europe**

**Victoria B-G Stadheim (SOAS University of London)**

The confused and polarised state of the debate on the nature of the European project, in part prompted by Britain's decision to leave the EU, begs the question of what were the drivers behind this project. Approaching this question from the perspective of the European periphery, the paper interrogates Portugal's path towards the EU and EMU. It scrutinises the relationship between internal and external drivers behind this trajectory. This means posing the question of whether the process was primarily driven by internal class forces and the fascist regime of the Estado Novo, if it was a result of international pressures and imperial dynamics, or if it was a combination of the two. The paper shows that Portugal's political leadership under the Estado Novo was initially reluctant, or even hostile, to any project of collaborating closely with Europe, as well as to the role of the US in the emerging world order. Portugal was still a colonial empire (albeit globally subordinate) and the political debate concerning foreign relations was posed in terms of Africa versus Europe. That is, the maintenance of the colonies was framed as mutually exclusive with European integration. Whilst the literature on Portugal's integration with Europe sometimes takes this dichotomy at face value, arguing that there was a fraction of Portuguese capitalists that sought to transcend the colonial question to instead integrate with Europe, existing evidence suggests that the monopolistic bourgeoisie was nowhere near ready to relinquish the colonial empire for this purpose. Separating between real and formal integration, the chapter argues that there was no inherent contradiction between these two options, and that Portugal's economic integration with Europe accelerated already in the 1960s. It was put on hold by the Carnation Revolution in 1974, but restored only two years later, when both internal and external players saw this as essential to save Portugal's democracy and economy. This came to lock Portugal into a Western European capitalist camp, and gradually, it led to a dismantling of many legacies from the Revolution.

# **Chronopolitics of Leisure**

**Sarah Stein Lubrano**

This paper explores how free time and leisure relate to emancipatory economics, and how Marxian conceptions of leisure suggest possible economic goals and structures. I build on Marx's definitions of labour and leisure and incorporate critiques of the idea of free time from Adorno as well as Marcuse, Veblen, and others. For Marx, freedom is found through genuine leisure, where one is not only not working to survive, but also engaged in an unalienated expression of one's potential. Marx notes that man produces even when he is free from physical need and truly produces only in freedom from such need. In this sense leisure is the opposite of labour, in leisure we produce without alienation from the product, while in labour we are always alienated from the product of our labour. This distinction suggests that not all seemingly free time can be leisure. Truly free time must not only not involve labour but also not involve activities like recovering from labour, reproductive labour, or any emotional or social labour required by one's job. To truly have leisure and freedom we must have time apart from all these concerns. Adorno (among others) builds on this idea, arguing that many forms of apparent free time are spent in activity that is inextricably part of labour: unfreedom is gradually annexing free time. While reformist measures (like the rules related to reading emails outside work) may have little real emancipatory potential, they relate to the wider task of imagining a world with far more genuine leisure. A truly emancipatory system should (among other things) account for forms of work like care, limit the amount of time spent looking for or waiting for work, and limit the importance or influence of social relationships. Accounting for this is especially important today, as work proves both more precarious and less societally necessary than ever before. In building an economic system oriented towards greater free time we must be clear about what really constitutes leisure and how to protect this type of leisure time so that it can be used for unalienated expression and creation.

## **Why is Anti-Immigrant Politics so Prevalent? A Hypothesis Based on a Political Economy of the Immigration Issue in Catalonia/Spain**

**Luke Stobart (Birkbeck College (University of London),  
Richmond University)**

Migration is a defining political issue of our time. However radical theory on the topic is underdeveloped and sometimes unhelpful. Immigration paradoxes most notably the juxtaposition between mainstream politics emphasis on controlling immigration and increases in illegal settlement have been simplistically attributed to the process of globalization and state decline or to conscious (and conspiratorial) strategies to supply employers with coerced and super-exploitable labor. These ideas find limited backing from politico-economic research on immigration in Catalonia and Spain between 1985 and 2011 (based on interviews with policymakers, social agents, migrant-rights activists and researchers; secondary investigation using Catalan and Spanish literature; and an in-depth review of mainstream and Marxist writing on the immigration question). My recent research findings firstly attribute the policy gaps described to the nature of European integration in other words an instrumental and bureaucratized regionalization articulated around and driven by power hierarchies between core and peripheries. Before the crisis EU membership compelled Spain to introduce restrictive legislation and fortify its southern border despite mass local demand for foreign labour a contradiction that ended in a spiral of irregular entry and amnesties of different sizes and forms, which itself fed the emergence of social

divisions between migrant and non-migrants and the emergence of negative public opinion towards migration. Restrictions also were encouraged by the desire for capitalist states to ensure the long-term reproduction of their abstract community through constant and suitably invisible negative nationcraft: problematizing immigration in general and particularly migration by groups deemed as culturally (or racially) incompatible with local national mythologies (for instance North Africans). Access to a pool of deportable "illegal" or precariously legal migrants provides some benefits to many employers but this cannot be seen as the driver of controls (a conspiratorial and reductionist approach). Spanish nationalism was rather the factor leading the illiberal Aznar government in the early 2000s to confront an alliance of unions, migrant groups and even employers pressing for greater regularization. It also led to policy tensions with pro-Catalan policymakers over desired migrant profiles, with Spanish politicians encouraging Spanish-speaking (Latin American) settlement, and pro-Catalan politicians and officials fearing that this might help undermine Catalan linguistic identity. In all, the subsoil of policy contradictions surrounding immigration can best be identified by eschewing economism and incorporating the best Marxist and radical writing on the state, nation and the politics of migration. By doing so it is possible to reveal the inherent relationship between the state system and the artificial problematization of migration - meaning that xenophobic and racist ideas will ultimately only become history with the overthrow of the capitalist state.

## **Death and Life in Marx's Capital: An Ethical Investigation**

**Ted Stolze (Cerritos College)**

In this talk I seek to reclaim Karl Marx's distinction in Volume I of *Capital* between what, following Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, we might call the conceptual personae of living and dead labor. For example, in chapter ten on *The Working Day*, Marx memorably and hauntingly observes that Capital is dead labour which, vampire-like, lives only by sucking living labour, and lives the more, the more labour it sucks. My aim is to make visible an important implied feature of Marx's ethics (as opposed to his moral philosophy) of flourishing. Along the way, I draw on, as well as propose an ethical supplement to, William Clare Robert's recent reconstruction of Marx's political theory in *Capital*. Moreover, I argue that such a supplement ought to be grounded in the human and nonhuman life-values that, as John McMurtry and Jeff Noonan have compellingly argued, are ceaselessly undermined by the capitalist mode of production. To be precise, in the concluding words of chapter fifteen on *Machinery and Large-Scale Industry*, Marx insists that capitalist production only develops the techniques and the degree of the social process of production by simultaneously undermining the original sources of all wealth the soil and the worker. In the twenty-first century, I suggest, we should expand on Marx's point and speak of the capitalist assault on both humanity and the Earth System. As an ethical alternative to G. A. Cohen's call for an egalitarian ethos, I conclude my talk by urging socialists to embrace and cultivate an ethos of non-domination in everyday life.

## **Barthes, Tel Quel, and the Genesis of Third meaning**

**Ian Peter Stone (Brunel University)**

Roland Barthes' *Third meaning* essay is one of his most referenced shorter pieces. Yet it is somewhat downplayed as a key theoretical contribution, in part because it is a later manifestation of a political aesthetics that might be regarded as Marxist countercultural



discourse; when the received narrative is that Barthes' abandons Marxism around the time of his argument with Picard and the French literary establishment. The visual taxonomy he develops in the Third Meaning essay, which was written for an issue of Cahiers Du Cinema in 1970; is explicitly a reaction to a transitional stage in French politics. It is somewhat a template for political film in a period when De Gaulle and then Pompidou have re-established the republic subsequent to Mai 1968 but are still confronted with strike waves and civil unrest, with French Capital still in a period of retrenchment. As well as outline the component parts of third meaning, which Barthes describes as 'the epitomy of the counternarrative'; and demonstrate its use in French films of the period, I will also trace its development from Barthes' early essays on photography to its key role in shaping the theoretical development of the Tel Quel group of which Barthes was a part; and suggest ways in which Third meaning might still be utilised as a political aesthetics methodology in the current period.

## **Max Weber and German Social Democracy: A New Take on Weber's Relationship to Marx, Socialism and the Labour Movement**

**Victor Strazzeri (Postdoctoral Fellow in History at the University of Bern)**

The debate on how the social theories of Karl Marx and Max Weber relate and how they differ goes back to the 1930s and has been revisited countless times since across a number of scholarly and national contexts. One angle of this debate that has received little attention is how much Weber was impacted by the rise of the first mass political party whose program was avowedly an extension of the ideas of Marx and Engels, i.e., German Social Democracy. While a class and political gulf separated the bourgeois Weber - and the National Liberal milieu he was brought up in - from the German labour movement in the end of the nineteenth century, the triumph of Social Democrats against persecution by Bismarck during the years of the 'Law against the Socialists' (1878-1890) and their subsequent status as a key political and social force in the German context would leave a clear mark on Weber's trajectory. Indeed, these years also saw mass strikes, the emergence of state social policy and the growing centrality of the 'social question'. This reveals, as this paper will argue, a more entangled relationship on Weber's part with the political and theoretical legacies of Marx than previously thought. Its clearest expression is found in Weber's distancing with regards to a patriarchal perspective vis--vis lower social strata, which was embodied, in turn, in his conditional recognition of the standpoint of the working class. This raised the possibility of a greater degree of political and trade-union activity by workers than most German liberals were prepared to accept. Nevertheless, Weber's gesture of recognition towards workers was undermined by the cultural, class and racial underpinnings of his viewpoint and consequent rejection of effective political and ideological autonomy on the part of the working class. As a result, his stance only encompassed the labour aristocracy, conceived as a pillar of imperial expansion, while entirely excluding unskilled workers and migrant workers with a low standard of life. Weber could therefore be described as a pioneer of 'Social Imperialism', i.e., the conservative strain in Social Democracy that Lenin would later identify and denounce.

# Raymond Williams's the Long Revolution Reconsidered

**Kenneth Surin (Duke University)**

Williams's *The Long Revolution* (1961) is still germane and significant nearly five decades after its publication. The crux of his argument is that a third revolution (with culture as its focus) is going to be needed after the democratic revolution and the industrial revolution which have already taken place. The argument for this long revolution is conducted through a historical study of such institutions as education and the press, the development of a common language, and the links between ideas, literary forms, and social history. A misconception immediately to be cleared comes from the meaning of the term long revolution itself -- Williams did not mean by this that the revolution has been taking a long time to complete itself. Rather, his concern is with cultural transformation on an epochal scale. The hallmarks of this epochal transformation are its difficulty of analysis and assessment, due mainly to its character as a complex unity, and to the fact that its core resides in human agency (though abstract social and economic forces are also involved). Williams was seeking a theory of revolution that avoided the reductionism of a certain kind of Marxism. He was deeply committed to democratic socialism (not the same as social democracy!) and the promotion of self-managed communities. My paper will examine these claims, with a particular focus on the need to integrate an account of the place of cyber- and informational technologies in the project of revolution. Kenneth Surin Duke University

# The Civilization of Capital: How Empire Pervaded the Epistemology of Emerging Marginalist Economics

**Mischa Suter (Department of History, University of Basel, Switzerland)**

The paper aims to contribute to a critique of political economy from a historical perspective. I use the tools of a social history of knowledge to investigate a shift towards marginal utility in economic thought that started in the 1870s. Explicitly developed in order to oppose Marxist and other socialist economic theories, marginal utility theory re-modeled political economy as the science of abstract, subjective exchange. Marginalism has various origins, one of which lies in imperial Vienna, with the so-called Austrian school of economics, the focus of this paper. The first two generations of this school were deeply embedded in the imperial context of the late Habsburg empire. The economists Carl Menger and Eugen Bhm-Bawerk were directly entangled in imperial politics as they were proposing a re-definition of liberalism by way of a theory centered around rational, abstract exchange. Ideas of stages of civilization (Kulturstufen) pervaded the marginalists theory-space of the calculating homo oeconomicus. The latter thus has surprising imperial roots. This becomes apparent in the debate on the conceptual role of money in abstract, subjective exchange that fervently preoccupied economists by the 1870s. Both the marginalists, with their stylized model of abstract exchange, and their main conceptual competitors in the field of bourgeois economics, the German Historical School of Economics, based their epistemologies on notions of stages of civilization. What is more, the pure theory of economics which the marginalists proposed facilitated the conceptual separation of a theoretical realm of universal economic principles on one hand and the supposed messiness of actual economic life on the other. However, as I aim to show, the marginalists had to undertake sustained boundary work in order to conceptually hold the unevenness and the antagonisms of capitalism at bay. It took a lot of effort to purge the racialized underclasses of the epoch of

imperialism out of the abstract theory-space of the abstract, calculating individual. I'd be happy to present this paper in any panel on the history of political economy, anthropology of economic life, empire, imperialism, theories of capital, among others.

## **The Legacy of Alice Milligan: Protestant, Feminist, Modernist and Unrepentant Fenian**

### **Ruth Taillon (Author: *When History Was Made: The Women of 1916*)**

Alice Milligan, as a key figure in the Celtic Revival was instrumental in shaping a modern Irish identity that looked to ancient, 'Irish Ireland' for its iconography. But perhaps more than most of her contemporaries, she was a very conscious proponent and committed practitioner - as both artist and activist - to an egalitarian, participatory approach that defined everything she did. Alice believed very strongly in the importance of ordinary people, and the responsibility of people to act on their own behalf and on behalf of their country and by becoming educated in Irish history and literature. Alice wrote, "Who is there that has not power to accomplish something?" Alice Milligan's artistic practice "was global as well as local, rural as well as urban. She promoted Irish culture within a context of anti-sectarian activism that was communitarian and that developed out of a feminist and modernist consciousness." (Catherine Morris). The talk will review the life and work of Alice Milligan, cultural and political activist, her ideas and models of participatory artistic practice that have resonance and relevance today.

## **Gendered Legacy of 1956: Revolution and Female Resistance in Hungary after 1956**

### **Dorottya Tamas (University of Sussex)**

The Revolution of Hungary in 23rd October 1956 is one of the most notable national ceremonies of the country. However, the public discourse only started to pay attention in the recent years of the usually forgotten females of 1956. The constructed collective memory of the nation has a huge impact on the ideologies concerning resistance and revolution. In the recent decade, Hungarian women have become both target of oppression of the neoliberal capitalism and the Orbánian right-wing politics. I would like to revisit the constructed national memory of the gendered concept of resistance, and connect it with the recent affairs of Hungarian politics and anti-feminist agenda. Rethinking the reasons behind the lack of collective female resistance in Hungary (opposed to other post-socialist countries), and argue for that only a Marxist, feminist concept of resistance can change the memorial discourse of revolution and female oppression in Hungary.

## **Organising Against the Odds: Gig Economy Couriers' Mobilisation in Italy and the UK**

**Arianna Tassinari (University of Warwick) and Vincenzo Maccarrone (University College Dublin)**

According to the commonly-held assumptions of mainstream industrial relations literature, workers in the so-called gig economy are supposed to be inherently hard to organise, due to the atomization, spatial dispersal and pervasive monitoring facilitated by technology which characterizes their jobs. However, the numerous episodes of gig workers emerging mobilizations which have sprung up around Europe since 2016, especially in the food delivery sector, are challenging many of these assumptions. In this paper, we develop a comparative analysis of two recent cases of gig workers mobilization in two different institutional and political contexts: the case of Foodora riders in Italy and of Deliveroo riders in the UK. Labour process theory and mobilization theory offer the theoretical bases for our analysis. Our aims are twofold. Firstly, through an analysis of the issues of contention around which workers mobilizations have centred in the two cases, we aim to disentangle what is old and what is new in this segment of the gig economy from a labour process and employment relations perspective, and contribute to ongoing debates about the potential for workers resistance and mobilization in the context of platform capitalism and algorithmic management practices. Secondly, we analyse the development of the couriers strikes in the UK and Italy and the role played in both cases by workers self-organization and by rank-and-file unionism to reflect on the possibilities and challenges presented by the new and hybrid organizing models that are emerging from workers struggles in the sector. A comparison of the UK and Italian cases, where the outcomes and sustainability of episodes of gig workers mobilization have so far been different more successful in the former, more short-lived in the latter - serves as a starting point to develop broader reflections on the role and potential success that different organizing practices can have in facilitating the process of construction of collective identities and of formation of the bases for class solidarity and sustained collective action in the gig economy in different political and institutional contexts.

## **A Critical Analysis of Social Reproductive Labour of Women In the Context of Neoliberal/Rural Disposessions: The Turkish Case**

**Ozlem Tezcek (Ordu University/TURKEY, Assistant Professor, Economics Department, Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences)**

The long history of capitalism has started with the enclosure of womens reproductive activities as well as land disposessions. Silvia Federici argues that many of the specific features of the transition to capitalism (such as the witch hunts, and the new Enlightenment Cartesian model of the mind/body relation and the body as machine) can be explained as part of the reorganization and disciplining of womens reproductive labour and peasants productive labour. Since 1980s, in Turkey, due to the certain agricultural policies of the state, Anatolian peasant families have lost their lands and forced to migrate towards big cities. Interestingly, this specific articulation of capitalism with patriarchy has forced women to stay at home, isolate themselves from outside world and carry the burden of all social reproductive work endlessly. In this regard, it will be asserted that the upward surge of capitalist accumulation process in Turkey during the neoliberal era has coincided with the

transformation of feudal type of patriarchy to capitalist type of patriarchy which has generated carceral relations for women at home. Finally, on this subject, we will introduce a specific field research about home-life and working conditions of women which has taken place in a shanty town in nye, Ordu.

Main Readings

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## **Carceral Infrastructures and Settler Colonial Technologies: Primitive Accumulation through Electronic Monitoring**

**Elise Thorburn (Brock University), Kamilla Petrick (York University)**

Electronic monitoring of various populations has emerged as a small-scale spatial fix (Harvey, 2001) to the unfolding crises of contemporary cybernetic capitalism. As a practice, monitoring human beings using geospatial technologies resolves several of the problematics of social reproduction (Caffentzis, 2002) today, and technologically expands ongoing processes of primitive accumulation (Federici, 2004), especially those particular to settler-colonial states like Canada..Emerging out of a multi-year research project examining the movement of electronic monitoring technologies from prisons out into the broader social realm, this presentation seeks first to historicise monitoring as a practice of primitive accumulation central to processes of settler colonialism. We then sketch the landscape of contemporary electronic monitoring technologies that are currently operational within various state institutions including prisons and corrections, immigration detention, health-, elder-, and child-care, demonstrating the way these devices come to digitise and monetise new realms of social reproduction. Simultaneously, the broad application of these devices deepens processes of primitive accumulation that have been foundational to the building of settler colonial states, and constitute new racialised modes of population management. When it comes to the contemporary usage of monitoring technologies the entanglement of the state and capital is central to the social reproduction of the system of capitalist accumulation the maintenance of a population, a stock, a commodity from which to extract value. It is both this landscape of monitoring and its connection to ongoing processes of primitive accumulation and settler colonialism that our research aims to highlight. In sketching this landscape, our presentation will provide a map of the carceral infrastructures that flow through the devices, technologies, and techniques of monitoring, used in both the public and private sector as an expanded form of primitive accumulation. These monitoring infrastructures, we argue, provide the logistical framework for continuing processes of primitive accumulation in settler colonial states.

# **Eco-Socialist Perspective on the Role of the Individual in the Ecological Crisis**

## **Alan Thornet (Socialist Resistance)**

I am active in the Campaign Against Climate Change and its trade union committee. I am a contributor to the Socialist Resistance website and of International Viewpoint. In this paper, I will address the role of the individual in terms of the ecological crisis in contrast to the role of governments and the role of the capitalist system itself.

Socialist and Marxist environmentalists, in the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, made an important contribution to the developing post war environmental movement in bringing the role of the capitalist mode of production, based on productivism and growth, into the debate on the ecological and climate crisis. This was an important counterweight to the narrative of the Greens and the emerging NGO's who tended to ignore or underestimate it.

Today, however, the role of capitalism is widely accepted and the debate has shifted, particularly amongst left environmentalists, on the extent to which the individual also has a responsibility for controlling his or her own ecological or carbon footprint— i.e. recycling, using renewable energy and low carbon transport, reducing meat consumption etc—or whether the responsibility remains exclusively at corporate and governmental level.

The concept of personal responsibility is often seen on the left as some form of moralism that has little or no value in terms of the protection of the planet, that it conflicts with collective responsibility, and that it is 'well meaning' but misguided. That it is some kind of reformist approach—a concession to capitalism that threatens to discredit our socialist or revolutionary credentials.

This paper argues that the left does not take this approach with any other of political activity—with gender politics for example or anti-racism.

When it comes to the environment, whilst the principle responsibility remains at governmental and corporate level domestic energy amounts to 58% of total usage, and choices made by the individual have a major role to play. It is also hard to see how it is possible to be a part of building a movement if you have no regard to your own impact.

## **The Agrarian Question and Revolutions Against Capitalism: How 'Green' are the New 'Peasant Wars'?**

### **Mark Tilzey (Coventry University)**

The conventional wisdom of the last quarter century has been that the agrarian question is a thing of the past and that somehow, within the hubristic milieu of late capitalism, we have been liberated from the constraints of agriculture, land, and nature. The premise underlying this paper, however, is that the agrarian question, far from being dead, is arguably the most fundamental question of the 21st century. Indeed, this is the century, we would suggest, in which the current system of trans-nationalizing capitalism and imperialism, and the neoliberal food regime which forms an intrinsic part of it, are likely to reach their reproductive limits across both political and biophysical dimensions. In response to the growing contradictions of and for capitalism, the outcome of the predatory character of monopoly-finance capital and the new imperialism that now characterizes North-South relations, there seems to be a renewed imperative for the wretched of the Earth to wrest control of global agriculture, land, and other natural resources from these class forces for

the purposes of autonomous, egalitarian, democratic, and ecologically sustainable development. This paper takes its cue from another forthcoming anniversary, the publication in 1969 of Eric Wolf's *Peasant Wars of the Twentieth Century*. In the spirit of that work, most pertinently the role of the peasantry in the Russian Revolution, this paper examines the dynamics of a more recent round of revolution against capital in Latin America (Bolivia, Ecuador) and Asia (Nepal). Specifically, the paper examines: The political economic (and ecological) basis for the rise of these peasant protest movements from the 1990s and how, especially with respect to the green dimension, these differ from the peasant wars discussed by Wolf; The reasons for their selective political success (for example, the constitutionalization of food sovereignty in all three states); By reference to the interplay of class, state, and capitalist dynamics, the reasons for the general failure, over the last decade, to build on this success; Whether the original aims and objectives of these protest movements remain relevant and feasible today, and, if so, how politically and agro-ecologically they might be revived and (re-)enacted.

## **Capitalism, Violence, Masculinity**

### **George Tomlinson**

This paper begins with Marx's account of the various forms of violence upon which capitalism depends in order to 'constantly revolutionise' itself. For Marx, these forms are at the heart of the reproduction of capitalism 'proper', in addition to the ongoing necessity of the 'original accumulation of capital'. However, the primary purpose of this paper is to argue for a concept of violence more expansive than that which informs Marx's critique of political economy. The violence that Capital draws upon - and decisively modifies - is the philosophical concept of *Gewalt*, which despite its complex character (it traverses other concepts such as *Herrschaft*, *Kraft*, and *Macht*, and thus takes in the meanings of domination, force, power, and violence), simply cannot single-handedly grasp the indissociable relation between capitalism and violence. For this reason, this paper draws on recent literature in Marxist feminism, feminist philosophy and Gender Studies, and contends that the capitalism-violence nexus is itself indissociable from the intricate relation, at both a structural and interpersonal level, between masculinity and violence. We cannot grasp capitalism's constant revolution, nor can we conceive of a revolution in opposition to this revolution, unless we come to terms with the contemporary relation between masculinity and violence.

## **Transformation of the State and Class Relations: Furthering Authoritarianism in Turkey**

**Aylin Topal (Middle East Technical University Department of  
Political Science and Public Administration), Galip L.  
Yalman (Middle East Technical University Political Science  
and Public Administration)**

This paper aims to contribute to the debate on the transformation of state in different historically specific contexts by problematising the concept of authoritarian neoliberalism. It intends to do so by exploring the reorganisation of social forces and transformation of state power within an authoritarian state form as exemplified by the case of Turkey. It will also attempt to refresh class analysis in order to develop a better understanding of different modalities of reproduction of labour quite often without economic and social security. This

is where the Gramscian theoretical framework gains saliency in understanding specific moments of collective will formation in the context of different ideological environments. This will entail an analysis of the extent to which and the methods by which popular classes are contained so as to preclude the development of counter-hegemonic strategies. This is pertinent to come to terms with the recent political developments in Turkey which could better be conceived - rather than simply in terms of a regime change - as a shift from one authoritarian form of state to another, specification of which is yet to be theorised in the light of the authoritarian turn experienced in several other capitalist countries.

## **Cuban Breach: State, Revolution, and the Historical Novel of Late Capitalism**

**Thomas William Lynn Travers (Birkbeck, University of London)**

Libra (1988), Don DeLillo's novelistic reconstruction of the Kennedy assassination, has generally been treated as a metafictional reflection on the collapse of so-called grand narratives. Such has been the concentration on one of the primal scenes of postmodernism, both in terms of content and form the novels decentred, dialogically composed narrative that few critics have passed comment on the other dislocatory event that haunts the novel: the actuality of the Cuban revolution. The actuality of revolution, a term taken from Georg Lukacs' Lenin, plays a crucial role in Lukacs's later theorisation of the historical novel. Developing the work of John Kraniuskas on historical noir, which could be understood as a state-centred reconfiguration of the historical novel, this presentation will propose that Libra is structured around a passive revolution from above and a permanent revolution from below. In order to do so, the paper will rewrite Libra's disjunctive narration of the linear time line of the C.I.A. plot, an assassination countdown and the off-kilter episodic wandering of Lee Oswald, as alternating between a white state code and red communist code. On the one hand, through the representation of intellectual labour, both in the form of the conspiracy and in the historiographic dilemmas of the novel's archivist, Nicholas Branch, Libra presents the State as subject and object of history. On the other, by tracking Oswald's wayward odyssey across the peripheries of the world market, DeLillo both adopts and twists Lukacs's archetypal maintaining individual. In its classical form, the maintaining individual is argued to bridge the emergence of a new hegemonic class. Symptomatic of the waning of history, DeLillo's Trotskyist Oswald, functions as a 'de-maintaining' individual who produces a cartography of the slums and housing projects of the world system but is unable to construct an image of a radical collective. The paper will conclude by suggesting that it is this de-linking of anti-capitalist struggle which both simultaneously marks the disappearance of the communist horizon and anticipates a coming multitude.

## **Italy 1919: Nationalism and Revolution**

**Megan Trudell (University of Newcastle)**

This paper considers 1919 in Italy, focusing on Gabriele D'Annunzio's armed seizure and rule of the city of Fiume on the Dalmatian coast in the context of the First World War and the revolutionary upheaval that interrupted and followed it. 1919 is seen here as a turning point in Europe that involved a complicated patchwork of widespread social confrontation and revolution, anti-colonial movements, nationalism and reaction as part of social and geopolitical reconfigurations and is assessed as a space in which many political outcomes were possible. D'Annunzio's republic at Fiume can be seen as 1919 in microcosm, an example in one contested city of the interconnected pressures of war and revolution on a



fragile state and the subjective responses of various political actors. My paper takes the case study of Fiume and examines, specifically, the subjectivities and motivations of soldiers and veterans in order to question explanations for Fascism first emerging as a force in 1919. These include the extent to which D'Annunzio foreshadowed Fascism; the weakness of the Italian Liberal elite; the role of violence and nationalism; and assessments of Fascism as an irruption in democracy's normal functioning and as a counterrevolutionary impulse. It argues that single explanations are of limited use in delineating Fascism and suggest a reintegration of social and class interpretations with newer developments in historical writing - such as discussions of emotion, space and culture - as a more productive approach for assessing the various insurgent responses to the crisis of 1919; it discusses the specificity of Italian Fascism and the aspects of its development that go beyond its significance as history to be of continued relevance to analysing the contours of Fascism in the 21st century.

## **Subtle Revolutions: Resistance as Seen in the Development of Female Mobilization and Socially Collaborative Art Practices in Cyprus**

**Evanthia Tselika (University of Nicosia)**

This presentation considers the idea of subtle revolution and patterns of resistance in how women mobilized in British colonial Cyprus and in how contemporary socially collaborative art practices could be perceived or not perceived as acts of defiance. This twofold reading brings together social art practices and female mobilization and considers the notion of resistance in relation to writings by Trotsky on art and revolution, as well as how resistance is encountered in Marxist thought (Luxembourg, Gramsci, Brecht). I propose here an understanding of how Marxist thought and the Russian revolution shaped the development of women working organizations through the first half of the twentieth century in colonial Cyprus and draw from archival material which was explored via an artistic collaboration that used the unorganized archive of POGO- Pancyprian Organisation of Democratic Women (the oldest female rights organization group associated with the Cyprus Communist Party). Patterns of mobilization and female structures of resistance and activism in Cyprus during British Imperialism will be highlighted. From the early feminist awakenings of the women teacher movement in the late nineteenth century to the nineteen twenties- thirties and forties, when the Organized Women Associations were set up, which organized strikes, meetings, educational activities and so forth. Images, letters, interviews and texts found within this unorganized archive attesting to the influence of not just Marxist thought but of the revolution in Russia. The research presented in relation to womens organisation in fact arose through a collaborative art project, within a contemporary art context which explores socially engaged art practice as a form of resistance, multi-authorship and being critically aware/politically active. This socially collaborative/participatory methodology of working, which in fact shaped this art project as it was developed with a group of eight women of different ages and educational training, will be questioned in relation to notions of resistance, collectiveness and social change. And like a ray of sunshine a new horizon appeared in the last few years, to guide the path of the working woman- the efforts to organize. And we witnessed in all the cities all those pioneers, whose heart fluttered in hope for a happier woman of the future, mobilizing... And one cannot help but think here of how Lenin's wise and brave words --Like that of man, the liberation of woman can only be realized by her-- inspired the Russian woman, who revolted next to the Russian man and contributed in this way to the victory of the Revolution Archive material. Antigoni Artemi, Us and Them, Opinion piece- speech. 7th of November 1942. Cyprus Image Cedit. Collective banner made using photos from POGO, PEO archives (focusing on female labour

and mobilization). Collaborative art project- Image from International Exhibition Neurosis-Neme Contemporary Arts, Cyprus. November 2016 (<http://www.neme.org/events/neurosis>).

## **Fascist, Neoliberal and Socialist Aesthetic Leveling**

**Adam Turl**

The introduction of aesthetics into political life and politicizing art (per Walter Benjamin) can produce similar if antagonistic forms. This is particularly the case with aesthetic leveling as both fascism and socialism respond to the alienation and grievances of the masses. There is a symmetrical but antagonistic relationship between the leveling of fascist vs. socialist artistic gestures: Jazz in Brechtian theater vs. volkskultur; Rock Against Communism vs. anti-fascist punk; the incorporation of popular forms in high art from both democratic and reactionary impulses (Expressionism, Constructivism, Surrealism, Dada, Pop, Arte Povera); etc. In between is the seemingly apolitical gesture: the Caddyshacks and neoliberal Horatio Alger myths that present bourgeois culture as [merely] stultified. Other writers have described the post-modern blurring of high and popular culture, and pastiche, as aesthetic leveling. It is more accurate to describe the former as aesthetic gentrification and the latter as modernisms teleos. Aesthetic leveling is part and parcel of capitalist culture. Its gestures valorize the life experiences of the masses; borrowing from high culture to give aura to popular impulses. At the same time, it tears down. It echoes the riot; Emile Zolas avenging crowds; the Boston mobiles uprooting deference from the English language; the protagonists in La Haine wrecking a haute Parisian art gallery. But it is also Nazi anti-art pogroms and Donald Trumps conspicuously vulgar presidential campaign. These variations produce radically different meanings and outcomes. This paper will sketch aesthetic leveling as part of capitalist culture; its left and right-wing valences; and the relationship of these aesthetic riots to both left-wing art and right-wing political developments. It will propose ideas and questions on how to incorporate aesthetic leveling into our artistic-political practice; to reclaim it for the left; and argue for a leveling-cosmopolitanism-from-below opposed to both the right-wing and neoliberal bourgeois.

## **Historicizing Strategy: the MIR in Conversation with Lenin**

**Daniel Tutt (UC Berkeley), Diego Arrocha (UC Berkeley)**

The Movement of the Revolutionary Left in Chile was able to articulate revolutionary strategy in two starkly contrasting periods: (1) The period of the Popular Unity government when the Chilean mass movement was strong and growing, and (2) the period of the military dictatorship when the mass movement faced extreme repression. To sustain a position of influence on the radical Left throughout both periods, and to understand the rightward shift in national politics, the MIR returned to Lenin's writings on the program. The MIRs theoretical engagement with the idea of the program in Lenin allowed them to develop a revolutionary theory for political intervention even in the most oblique political climate. The party developed a practical theory of periodization that allows for a revolutionary strategy corresponding to the real limits of historical conditions. We will reconstruct three central elements of the MIRs theory developed through their reading of Lenin: First the program, reflecting the sectors susceptible to a revolutionary social alliance and the tasks of socialization. Second, an analysis of the period, which defines the limits and possibilities for the mass movement. And third, a platform of struggle which, within the limits of the present period, attempts to advance the program and move toward a

revolutionary period. Through their theory, the MIR was able to leave behind the class essentialisms often associated with communist strategy. Returning to the MIRs theoretical work allows us to historicize strategy and helps in drawing lessons, rather than dogmatisms, from the past.

## **The Myth of Primary Accumulation and The Myth Land-Appropriation**

**Nikolaos Tzanakis-Papadakis (Doctoral Student at Free University of Berlin)**

As the political economical fiction of the primitive accumulation has to explain and to legitimize the origin of the normal accumulation of capital, so the juridical myth of the primitive land-appropriation serves the purpose of founding the origin of the concrete legal order. The land-appropriation, both in its classical modern conception as "primary ownership" (Kant) and "radical title" (Locke), and in its reactionary revival by Carl Schmitt (Landnahme), has been considered as a politically neutral legal action, preceding logically and historically any concrete juridical distinction such as "Public and Private", as well as any concrete property title. According to the bourgeois legal tradition, the land-appropriation contains no concrete legal relation, but the legal relation itself. Although the primitive constitutional legal act has been considered as singular and non reiteratable act, the disintegration of the bourgeois legal orders at the beginning of the 20th century posed the question about the reiterability of those constitutional acts by reference to phenomena of general legal crisis, like the state of emergency. The latter was conceived as the sovereign revival of the constitutional legal act of land-appropriation. Based both on Marx portrayal of the transition from feudal to the bourgeois legal system, and on his conception of the bourgeois form of law (Gesetz) as "normalization" of class antagonism, I will examine the relation between the economical myth of primary accumulation and the juridical myth of law constituting land-appropriation. Thereby I will analyze the inner relation between the concept of legal constitutional act and the necessity of its reiteration in the form of a state of emergency. From this will follow how procedures of law positing, as well as processes of law destruction, must become cardinal part of every consistent marxist theory of legal form in order to understand the complex relation between capitalist mode of production and (exceptional) counterrevolutionary state interventions.

## **Critique of Political Economy and Civil Society**

**Marco Vanzulli (Universit degli Studi di Milano-Bicocca)**

Civil society as outlined by Marx in his young works has been often accused of reducing to the mere conflict the more constructed picture of civil society one can find in Hegel's Philosophy of right. And yet this reduction in its fundamental lines was maintained throughout the Marxian critique of political economy and enabled the characterization of the crucial moments of the conflict between capital and labour, standing on the same ground of classical political economy. So, Marx's poor notion of civil society is a choice, a theoretical one, not only an historical a choice that can be analysed in its reasons and results. In 50s and 60s Italian operaismo perspective was foreign to the mainstream of left tendency at that time, guided by the powerful cultural apparatus of communist party. An apparatus that had in Gramscism its core and with the term Gramscism I mean Gramsci's work and ideas as they were proposed at the time by Togliatti's party. Now, the center of this perspective was no more labour, but civil society life, with its cultural institutions, the ideological

apparatuses of the State, but in fact more the ones out of the State, meant as political society. Compared to this, operaismo has drawn the attention on labour and on factory conflict, re proposing in a different way the issue of the subjectivity that has to organize this conflict. Identifying this subjectivity was however a harder task than in Marx's thought. The outcomes of this research are really unconvincing, they arrive at the refusal of theory of value itself on behalf of a hypostatization of fight. But what I want recall here are some thesis of the first operaismo, thesis of Raniero Panzieri, who thought that the moment of production [] generalize itself and tends to invest all the moments of social life, it tends to integrate always more the parts that in the first stages of capitalistic development appear divided, as independent spheres factory, civil society, State to make of them a unique sphere, without nevertheless the vanishing of the specific features of every sphere, while this phenomenon is presented by ideologies as disappearance of working class, as tertiarization (from Working fights in capitalistic development). These insights are still very valuable and they can serve to base for an analysis of labour and civil society today. Civil society analysis here is included in, or seen from what Marx called civil society anatomy. One could say that, in its real mode of operation, civil society is much more than that, but when we put in this framework other elements we take the risk of lose sight of the essential features of the picture.

## **The Concept of the Political in Marx's Concept of Crisis**

### **Jonas Van Vossole**

Since the fall of the Berlin wall, in a world in which labour seemed to have lost its universality as historical subject, and the rise of anti-racist and feminist movements led to identity politics, many post-marxists have been using Carl Schmitt's conceptualization of the Political - combined with notions of Gramsci - to revise critical theory and criticize neoliberal hegemony. In this paper I will argue that Marx's perspective on crisis/exception is more "political" than Schmitts. Throughout its conceptual history - from Greek mythology and philosophy, to its modern scientific meanings - the concepts of crisis relied upon an apparent opposition between subjectivity and objectivity. I explore how, from Socrates to Marx, these dialectic relations have dominated European political philosophy. The concept of crisis explores the boundaries between judgement and process, between ideology and material circumstances and thus reveals the boundaries between "science" and the two other epistemological fields which are often opposed to science: history - with an analysis of the metodenstreit and Popper - and the Political - with a focus on the work of Carl Schmitt and the state of exception. Based on these I make the case that crisis opens the way for a truly political and historical scientific knowledge. Such a "Political" scientific perspective - rather than the natural or social scientific framework - I consider essential for critical theory about science in times of liberal hegemony. On these basis I will argue for a return towards Marxism - as the political science par excellence - in order to address the shortcomings of critical theory today.

## **The Boomerang Effect: Colonial Genealogies of Fascism**

### **Eleni Varikas**

In, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, first published under the title *The burden of our time*, Arendt puts forward the boomerang thesis, suggesting that the roots of European totalitarianism, especially Nazism, lay in European overseas colonialism. The idea that imperial politics returned as a boomerang back to Europe in the form, of fascism and

nazism was also expressed by the Marxist theorist Karl Korsch at almost the same time as Arendt. According to Korsch, The Nazis have extended to civilized European peoples the methods hitherto reserved for the natives and the savages living outside so-called civilization (Korsch 1942). Similar arguments were also developed by major African American intellectuals as W.E.B. Dubois and A. Baldwin, Caribbean Marxists as Aim Csaire, CLR James, and others. Several historians of the Nazi occupation policies during World War II pointed out the essentially colonial nature of the NaziGerman national project in the Wild East. According to Alexander Dallin, Hitlers favourite analogy was British India, with Russia as Germanys India, while Robert Koehl suggested, the Nazi East was a cross between the American Wild West and British India Looking back to these forgotten genealogies in the light of the present rise of fascist and neo-Nazi movements and the immigration and refugee European policies, I propose to reflect on this imperial and colonial undercurrent of Western history coming once again to the surface and the triumphant coming-back of race as a legitimate grid of political understanding. Eleni Varikas Emerita Professor of Political Theory Universit Paris 8 Vincennes Saint-Denis Centre de Recheches Sociologiques et Politiques de Paris CRESPPA/CNRS

## **The Eros of Intellectual History: Lydia Sklevicky's Dialogic Epistemology and Rada Ivekovi 's Decolonising Methodologies**

### **Vanessa Vasic-Janekovic (Worker and Housewife)**

To assume that the field of intellectual history underplays its materialist, feminist, Marxist, decolonising, neuroscientific or, indeed, intersectional methodological frameworks would amount to collapsing the field into the canon that dominates it—one that professes difficulty (Skinner and Pocock, for example) in conveying what the field, in fact, is. By assuming, instead, that the field of intellectual history is articulated, defined and continuously reinvented through its methodologies, we begin to make visible its underpinnings of infinite trans-historical collective conversations (with pulse, at that). In order to propose an epistemological framework with such vitally materialist functional threshold I will convoke, analyse, adapt and use methodologies developed by Lydia Sklevicky and Rada Ivekovi—Their work has an important habituating pull: rooted in Yugoslav socialist, anti-colonial and most of all, deeply embodied revolutionary epistemologies, their methodologies prime the material of our framework for two initial tasks. Firstly, to distinguish the 'ideological pastures' (Sklevicky) clearly from the field—a complex movement that, within this approach, also involves a deep re-articulation of the concept of colonisation, affecting, in turn, the ways in which the feminist, Marxist and decolonial approaches can reconfigure the field of intellectual history beyond the 'limits of European humanism' (Ivekovi→). Secondly, to reconnect to the moving collective body of the becoming of the intellect—by surrounding the static portrait of the intellectual with the multitude of intellects and conversations continually shaping it. In order to provide a particularly deeply layered account, we will work with Sklevicky 's research into the organisation of the Yugoslav Antifascist Women 's Front (AF ) and Ivekovi—'s studies of revolutionary organising of women.

# **Solidarity and Resistance Spaces of the Refugees: (Trans)forming Political Consciousness and Engagement**

**Giorgos Velegrakis (Harokopio University Athens, Greece), Eirini  
Gitanou (Kings College London)**

In this paper, we focus on the development of spaces of resistance of the refugees, which have been emerged mainly trying to respond to the problem of their accommodation, but also their everyday life. Such ventures have been organized mainly through solidarity assemblies, with the people participating declaring having no relationship with the state, the government and the various NGOs, proposing a different, horizontal way of functioning, based on the principles of democracy and self-organization of both the refugees and the *solidaires*.

Having participated in such projects, we first present their major stakes, their political context and logic, their contradictions and limits, their diversity with respect to the official structures, and their subsequent targeting by the State and the official volunteer organizations. In an attempt to avoid politically simplistic accounts that seek to either minimize or romanticize such solidarity movements and initiatives, we analyse them as phenomena in constant motion that transform their practices, methodologies and internal (power) relations. In order to unravel them, we must also examine the relationships between performativity and subject formation. If we are to follow a Gramscian perspective, these relationships are nonlinear and complex, depend on conscious and active political intervention, and must necessarily concern political objectives and outcomes.

Thus, our focus is on the formation and transformation of political consciousness of the refugees, in relation to their participation in such projects and their own experience. We take into account the contradictions and limits of the identity of the refugee in such a process, being temporary, undesirable and contradictory. Further, the former political identities, the political background of the refugees coming from countries under political turmoil, but also the aspirations of “official” political inclusion affect them and the formation of collective political subjectivities. Still, the active participation of the refugees in long-lasting solidarity projects under a different logic leads to the formation of *political communities under construction*, which result to a different paradigm of political subjectivity and inclusion and potentially affect their future political engagements. We examine these questions by performing interviews with refugees participating (or having participated) in such ventures, focusing on their political engagement and identity, and its transformation.

# **With the Law Against the Law: A Materialist Critique on the Role of the Legal Form in Anti-Capitalist Struggles**

**Carolina Alves Vestena (University of Kassel)**

The research on social movements was initially categorized within the disciplines of sociology; meanwhile, with the transnationalization of networks of movements themselves, the field also spread to the political science, international relations and, finally, the law. Such reflection, however, is often marked by the lack of a more in-depth analysis of the ambivalent role of the legal form in capitalist social relations, a debate that has long been

held by the materialist theory of law. Considering this diagnosis, this article aims at highlighting possible pathways to be developed for an analysis of the forms of mobilization of rights from the point of view of social movements that also consider the complexity of the legal form and its role in capitalism. The paper is divided in three parts. The first focuses on the current debates on social movements, protests and austerity policies. The second brings a review of the materialist theories of social movements. And discusses two case studies on the legal confrontation during the Portuguese crisis in 2011 and the mobilizations against the new labor law and “its world” in France and their peak in 2016 during the “Nuit Debout” movement.

## **Eco-Austerity**

**Troy Vettese (New York University)**

There are three reasons to suggest that a shortage of land could and should be the undergirding principle of the environmentalist Left. Firstly, if the worst of climate changes ravages is to be averted, then the energy system must be based on wind and solar flows, yet these technologies have a low power density, a term describing the relationship between energy production relative to a systems surface area (i.e. W/m). In short, wind and solar require a lot of land. The second limitation stems from the on-going mass death of plant and animal species. The main cause of this extinguishing of non-human life is humanity's ever great expropriation of the earth's surface, most often driven by the aim to rear edible livestock. Thirdly, more of the earth needs to revert to wilderness or remain wilderness to act as a carbon sink. Natural--rather than artificial--geo-engineering can safely cool the planet. Vibrant bio-diverse habitats absorb much more carbon than human-made landscapes, whether deserts, plantations, or cities. These three goals, however, are more closely intertwined than they seem for cuts in consumption are needed to give more space to wild eco-systems, which depend on biodiversity to function effectively as carbon sinks. There are, however, many means to reduce energy consumption. A useful framework is the 2000 Watt Society, which marries environmental and global economic justice, for it would allow the poorest people in the world to double or triple their consumption, while requiring a commensurate reduction by the richest. The framework set out in this paper returns Leftist political economy to its roots in the works of the classical economists, especially David Ricardo, and Karl Marx own musings of the good life in a post-capitalist society.

## **Mortgage strikes and the politics of debt: the case of the Uruguayan Federation of Mutual- Aid Housing Cooperatives**

**Lorenzo Vidal (Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona)**

Interest-bearing capital has, in recent decades, increasingly woven itself into activities in the sphere of social reproduction. This is particularly apparent in the case of housing, with the expansion of mortgage credit throughout large swathes of the planet. These developments point to the need to further inquire how the capital-labour and debtor-creditor relations are intertwined. Insufficient practical and theoretical engagement with these overlapping battle-lines is, according to some commentators (e.g. Lazzarato, 2015, p. 208), the “worker’s movement’s death knell” .

In the sphere of production, collective organisations such as trade unions and syndicates often mediate the distribution between profits and wages. In the sphere of circulation,

however, fee-based and interest-based revenue resulting from secondary exploitation (Marx, 1999) or financial expropriation (Lapavistas, 2009) have in few cases been challenged by the development of any comparable collective forms of intervention.

This is due, in part, to the fetish character of money and credit and of social relations in the realm of exchange more generally. It is also grounded on the atomization of debtors. As the Debt Collective (2015) puts it, in this case “there are no shared factory floors”. Consequently, underlying power relations are rarely made explicit in open social conflict and are thus commonly mystified by the seemingly a-political and neutral language of finance.

This paper is centered on a case where mortgage debtors have developed a shared groundwork: the Uruguayan Federation of Mutual-Aid Housing Cooperatives (FUCVAM, in Spanish). The collective property of these cooperatives means that the mortgage debt of individual households is mutualised. In turn, their federation at a national scale transforms them into a powerful collective debtor. It is upon this basis that two successful sector-wide mortgage strikes and mortgage debt renegotiation processes have been carried out. The study focuses on the latest strike (2001-2011) and draws from interviews with key actors in the negotiating counterparties, a compilation of the conflict’s media coverage and relevant official documents. The main objective is to analyse the ways in which the debtor-creditor relation was politicized and the institutional, economic and social context that underpinned this process.

A historical materialist study of this experience becomes useful in informing both theory and praxis regarding an increasingly prominent social relation in the sphere of housing: the debtor-creditor relation.

## **Anomaly and Autonomy: On the Currency of the Exception in the Value Relations of Contemporary Art**

**Marina Vishmidt (Goldsmiths)**

This paper is concerned with tracing the political dimensions of the ‘unthought’ (Wilderson) when it emerges as constitutive, an operative loophole in capitalist world-making. I will revisit the genealogies of the ‘economy’ as developed in the work of Timothy Mitchell and Michel Foucault, and put these into dialogue with the critical Marxist concept of ‘value form’ and value relations. These three approaches enables us to locate ‘exploitation’ and ‘domination’ as inextricable dynamics rather than the separability implied by ‘society’ and ‘economy’ as discrete analytic or agential spaces, however supplementary. In this light, I’ll be attending to the ‘economies’ of the rule and the exception to foreground the debates over value production in Marxist feminist and ecological theories of reproductive labour, with some attention to critical theories of race. These comprise an attempt to read deeper into status of the anomalous as a ground for a politics of artistic work and artistic labour in the current moment.

The question of the anomaly as a way of framing the economy of art in capitalism is an interesting and a demanding one because, unlike in many logical cases and empirical situations, it is the rule that which makes the exception visible, in the case of art – and, as I shall argue, not only art, or rather, art is not a case but an instance – it is the exception that allows us to understand the rule. What does that mean? By focusing on a social form that appears to be anomalous to the rules of markets and the law of value alike, we come to see the tools of accounting as markers of unaccountability. The rule in its suspension – suspended before us, visible from



every angle.

## **Ecologically Unequal Exchange: Sketches of a Harveyan Theoretical Framework**

**Rikard Warlenius (Lund University)**

Ecologically unequal exchange (EUE) basically signifies that global net flows of biophysical resources go from developing countries to developed countries. EUE can be regarded as both a method and a theoretical claim. In the first sense, EUE has been tested empirically and largely confirmed through the application of biophysical measures. The theoretical claim in the second sense is that EUE to some degree causes underdevelopment/peripheralization of the global South. Theories on EUE in the second sense are often based on neo-Marxist (development) economics (NME), which includes dependency theory, world system analysis and theories of monopoly capital. This is no coincidence, since the perspectives share an emphasis on territorial conflict dimensions in a world system divided into core and periphery. Yet, there are aspects of NME that make it less suitable as a theoretical framework for EUE, such as its positioning of EUE within a vaguely defined imperialism, its emphasis on geopolitics and state power, its distress of capitalism as a mode of production, its emphasis on economic growth rather than accumulation, and its deterministic analysis of capitalism as relentlessly environmentally destructive. In the full paper, I propose that uneven development, as developed by David Harvey, is a better starting point for a Marxist theoretical framework for EUE. Besides offering more dialectic analyses of the above listed problems, Harveys analysis of global capital accumulation can provide new and interesting insights about EUE. It underlines the relevance of focusing on the exchange of commodities, since capitalist expansion is not primarily about unidirectional extractivism, but just as much about expanding commodity markets. Also, it emphasizes that resource extraction is dependent on wage labour, which suggests a closer relation between the more well-established concept of unequal exchange and ecologically unequal exchange than is often acknowledged in the EUE discourse. Despite the lack of a comprehensive ecological theory of uneven development, Harvey offers perceptions of capitalisms spatial configurations, imperialism and economic growth that are interesting alternatives to the usual neo-Marxist framework of EUE.

## **Accounting as the Language of Advanced Financial Capital and Indebtedness**

**Rebecca Warren (Royal Holloway, University of London), David Carter (University of Canberra)**

The purpose of this paper is to reflect on the implications of a hegemonic war of positions (Gramsci, 1926; 1971) between capitalism and capitals (industrial, knowledge and financial), and a genuflection of capital towards financial capital. In particular, the impact of the global financial crisis and the increased signification of debt and indebtedness with respect to the individual and with respect to sovereign nations are constituent components of this intervention (Lazzarato, 2012, 2015; Graeber, 2011, Mellor, 2010). Researchers have illustrated the traditional role of accounting in relation to industrial capital as a powerful tool for owners of capital to protect their privileges, power, and wealth through the maintenance and enhancement of that power and wealth (see, for example, Bryer, 2005; 2006; Chiapello, 2003; Puxty, 1993; Tinker, 1985). The role of accounting as the language of capital and the language of exploitation is well-established, as accounting operates to

support the status quo of inequality and inequity, inherent in capitalisms. There has been a developing accounting literature concerning accounting as a language of expropriation in a post-Fordist economy, and the impacts of a shift towards a knowledge or immaterial-based economy (Hardt & Negri, 2000; 2005; 2009): this literature illustrates attempts by accounting to appropriate/expropriate the value of immaterial labour (see, for example, Harney, 2006; Spence & Carter, 2011; Cooper, 2015; Mkel, 2013; Bhm & Land, 2012; Adkins, 2009). These works on industrial and knowledge capital illustrate the superstructural role of accounting in supporting the economic base (Gramsci, 1926; 1971; Laclau & Mouffe, 2001). However, this paper focuses on a new war of position (and illustrates that accounting, in a reconstituted form, operates in a hegemonic manner) concerning financial capital and indebtedness. This war of position between financial capital and national capitalisms and individuals serves the master of financial valorisation. Which is illustrated through three distinct, but related examples: The use of Fair Value Accounting by Enron, the role of Fair Value Accounting in the Global Financial Crisis, and the use of Accounting technologies for transfer pricing in taxation by multinationals in a war against national capitalisms.

## **A Workers' Inquiry at Deliveroo: An Account and Analysis of Delivery Work in London**

### **Facility Waters**

In the past few years there has been a rapid growth of Uber for X type companies. These are positioned as platforms that disrupt existing business models by providing new app enabled ways to deliver services. In the case of Deliveroo, this involves a service that connects restaurants and customers, offering delivery of food via a growing workforce of bicycle and moped drivers. Deliveroo has attempted to formally outsource the workers, using self-employed independent contractor status to divest themselves from many formal employment protections. This process also involves black boxing the labour process, obscuring the actual work behind an online platform and smartphone app. Customers are offered a relatively simple way to arrange a delivery, minimising contact with the company or the workers; while the workers are only given enough information to complete each stage of the delivery, often relatively isolated from the company and many of their co-workers. This new method for organising work is still not adequately understood, despite the recent headline news about the campaign of Deliveroo workers and the IWGB (the Independent Workers Union of Great Britain). Despite the negative implications for workers on these precarious contracts, the experience of the labour process remains hidden, while the possibilities for resistance and organisation remain in an early stage. To address these questions, the paper presents an attempt at an inquiry by a Deliveroo driver. It takes inspiration from previous attempts at workers inquiry, particularly examples of co-research like *The American Worker* which combined worker experience with analysis. This has been updated with the use of digital information, drawing on GPS tagging, metadata, and new ways to visualise the labour process to explore how work is being transformed. In this experimental piece, the paper seeks to peel back the digital black box, illustrating the experience of Deliveroo work.

## **Where are the Girls? Age and Gender in Eco-Marxism**

**Judith Watson (University of Brighton)**

Marxist ecofeminists have argued that Marx neglected women's unpaid work, and reproduction. It is understandable that such a view would have resonance, given that in the 1960s and 1970s socialists around the world including Western Europe and North America found that not only orthodox dialectical materialism from the Soviet Union defended patriarchal practices, but that Trotskyist and New Left critiques were slow in adopting feminist analyses, understood as sectionalist. I examine Marx's Paris Manuscripts and find that Marx, before discussing exploitation and alienation in the labour process, cited research showing that the majority of factory workers were women or children. Already in 1844 he had the outline of a critique of political economy that took aim at what we would now call its victim-blaming, and in particular its neglect of the fact that human mammals need to eat in order to live (our relation with non-human nature, which Marx called the "inorganic body"). Conspicuous by its absence is any discussion of women writers, most notably Harriet Martineau, who promulgated in short stories a moralistic ideology citing the supposedly scientific principles of political economy, but also rooted in patriarchal Protestant Christianity, to show the poor that they are their own worst enemy. "Where are the Girls?" is asked in a nineteenth-century English folk song, which goes on to reply: "I'll tell you plain. The girls have gone to weave by steam." As economic historians have often pointed out, most recently Andreas Malm in his history of fossil fuels in England, youth and female labour, often coerced, was at the centre of the industrial revolution in England. Versions of eco-Marxism that equate adult men with production and women and children with reproduction are not compatible either with historical reality or with Marx's understanding of that reality.

## **The Last Day of Oppression, and the First Day of the Same: The Politics and Economics of the New Latin American Left**

**Jeffrey R Weber**

This book explains the political dynamics and conflicts underpinning the contradictory evolution of left-wing governments and social movements in Latin America in the last two decades. Throughout the 2000s, Latin America transformed itself into the leading edge of anti-neoliberal resistance in the world. What is left of the Pink Tide today? What are the governments' relationships to the explosive social movements that propelled them to power? As China's demand slackens for Latin American commodities, will they continue to rely on natural resource extraction? This talk is grounded in an analysis of trends in capitalist accumulation from 1990 to 2015, in Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador and Venezuela. It explains inequality there today through a decolonial Marxist framework, rooted in a new understanding of class and its complex associations with racial and gender oppression. The talk will also cover indigenous and peasant resistance to the expansion of private mining, agro-industry and natural gas and oil activities. Finally, the presentation will conclude with remarks on "passive revolution" in Bolivia under Evo Morales and debates around dual power and class composition during the era of Hugo Chavez in Venezuela.

# **There is Only a Constituting Movement: Marx and Engels as Pioneers in the Study of Complex Adaptive Systems**

**Julian Wells (Kingston University London)**

This paper addresses aspects of Marx and Engels thought with implications for their political economy that at least in the Anglophone world have been either fundamentally misunderstood or entirely overlooked. The topic in question is the fundamental role of the idea of chance, and hence the need for a probabilistic understanding of economic and social life. This can be shown to have led not only to an advanced statistical appreciation of crucial issues in Capital, but an understanding of the emergence of laws of political economy and of society that is both antecedent to and richer than the conservative law of unintended consequences. Also, in view of attempts to blame Engels for the vulgarisation of Marx's thought as economic determinism, it is important to demonstrate that neither Engels nor Marx were determinists of any description. A particular misunderstanding in Marx's reception relates to the way in which Marx's thinking drew on the work of the Belgian statistician Adolphe Quetelet, inventor of the concept of the average man (and of the body mass index). This misunderstanding can now be illuminated and corrected by reference to Marx's notes from Quetelet's writing. The structure of the paper is as follows: First, we examine Marx's discussion of chance and necessity in his doctoral dissertation, the probabilistic conception of economic laws exhibited in his early writings, and his application of this in Capital Second, we show that Marx was familiar with the subject matter of 19th century controversy over the interpretation of social regularities; in the light of this we consider Engels' attitudes to free will (agency) and determinism. Third, Marx's notes on Quetelet and their specific connection with Capital and other writings are analysed. Finally, we consider the relations between the thought of Marx and Engels with two modern trends in economics: econophysics and complexity.

## **On the KPD Before 1923 - The Building of a Mass Party**

**Florian Wilde (Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung, Berlin)**

Being founded in the middle of the German Revolution 1918/19 the Communist Party of Germany (KPD) found itself quickly politically beheaded after the killings of its most famous leaders just weeks after its beginnings. Facing harsh repression the party experienced periods of illegality and had to struggle with internal conflicts as well as political splits during its first year of existence and remained a marginal political force. Only after the unification with the left wing of the Independent Social Democratic Party (USPD) at the end of 1920 the communists became a mass party. But only shortly afterwards, after the failed uprising known as the March Action in 1921, the party lost again half of its members. The consolidation of the KPD as a mass party began under the leadership of Ernst Meyer from the summer of 1921 onwards. Main element of this consolidation was the United Front strategy adopted by the KPD, its highly democratic internal regime and its certain degree of independence from Moscow and the Communist International. During this period the KPD managed to grow in terms of its members, its trade union base and its relevance in society and developed its identity as a mass party. This consolidation laid the groundwork for its final attempt to seize power in the autumn of 1923.

## **Three Dialectics of Barbarism: Luxembourg, Benjamin, Adorno**

**Geoffrey Wildanger (Brown University)**

The persistence of barbarism into the twentieth century appears most clearly in three notable slogans: socialism or barbarism, no document of culture, which is not simultaneously one of barbarism, and the dialectic of culture and barbarism. All three of these statements raise the specter that something about the pre-modern past the time in which barbarism is typically circumscribed haunts the present, by threatening to either reappear or to reassert itself. All three provoke the question of their historical specificity. Is there something unique about the moment when they are asserted that makes them particularly pertinent? Is the question of barbarism, in Benjamin or Adorno, one specific to capitalism, as it is in Luxembourg? Or do Benjamins and Adornos lines propose that the ontology of rationality or culture themselves, taken as trans-historical, always risk a reversion into barbarism of which certain capitalist forms are just a subset? This paper will investigate Benjamins and Adornos statements, with reference to that of Luxembourg, in order to argue that certain aspects of their apparently trans-historical claims are, indeed, meant as historically specific interjections.

## **Language, Labour and Social Reproduction: What the GCSE English Curriculum Tells Us About Education, Social Reproduction and Struggle Today**

**Jen Wilkinson**

Education is one of the main mechanisms for reproducing the extant social order. As a result, education is a site of important contests and struggles. In UK secondary education today, two principle struggles are being fought that go to the heart of the social reproductive processes of the capitalist order: one about the content and form of the curriculum, and how this produces and reproduces a particular type of subject as future labour power; and secondly, a struggle over the labour of education workers as current labour power in schools. Struggles, then, both ideological and material, about the nature and role of education and the education processes in reproducing both students and teachers under conditions of late capitalism. Using the recent reforms to the GCSE English curriculum as an entry point, this paper looks at the ways in which education tends to accommodate the imperatives of capital accumulation and capitalist socialist reproduction, but also, the forms of resistance and struggle, both potential and actual, to these dominant processes.

## **The Bolsheviks and Sexuality: the Importance of Historical Context**

**Colin Wilson**

The changing attitudes of the Soviet government to sexuality can be taken to reflect its overall historical development from emancipation in 1917 (when sex between men was legalised) to repression in the 1930s under Stalin (when it was recriminalized). While accepting that overall account, this paper seeks to respond to some of the evidence which doesnt fit so simply into that framework by examining the constantly changing historical

context of Bolshevik/Communist attitudes to sex. For example, the Bolsheviks critics have argued, if the new regime was committed to sexual liberation, what are we to make of Lenin's apparently prudish comments to Clara Zetkin, including his statement that promiscuity in sexual matters is bourgeois? Why was sexuality the topic of so little writing by leading figures after October? Why did Alexandra Kollontai make no mention of same-sex desire in her account of the winged Eros? This paper offers a historicised account which locates approaches to sex in the broader context of Russian society as it went through a series of dramatic changes between the 1890s and the 1930s. Topics covered include: the social reality of marriage, sexuality and family life for revolutionaries before 1917 the dominant ideas of the revolutionary tradition, such as the utopian vision of Chernyshevsky the social dislocation of the Civil War period an assessment of initiatives from the period of War Communism such as collective dining halls and laundries a first step towards the utopian project of abolishing the family, or pragmatic measures to sustain the population? the significance of NEP 1926 debates about reforms to the Soviet Marriage Code: the impact of lack of state resources urban versus rural Russia: issues with divorce and alimony in the countryside Historically contextualised in this way, the Bolsheviks approach to sexuality is seen to merit a sympathetic, if not uncritical, assessment. Such a historicised approach to sexuality also, however, highlights a more general point about our approach to the October Revolution: while the Bolsheviks actions remain inspiring, they are situated in a historical context and, as such, cannot be simply taken as a model for today.

## Performance and Abstract Labour

### Josefine Wikstrom

Like much dance-works and performance from the early to the mid 1960s Rainer's entire oeuvre in general, and *Trio A* in particular, has been discussed in relation to different forms of labour. Catherine Wood's essay on *The Mind is Muscle* is one such attempt in which she emphasises the way in which it "presented groups of people dancing images of labour."<sup>1</sup> Similar readings have also been made of Simone Forti's *Dance Constructions* from 1961 in which she explicitly used a method coming from theories of division of labour to construct her dances: namely tasking. Theorisations have also been done of the 1970s dance form contact improvisation, invented by the Judson Church Dancer Steve Paxton in the 1970s in terms of labour. But whereas Forti's or Rainer's work have been discussed in as performing manual and embodied labour and therefore as a break with forms of alienated labour, contact improvisation, with its smooth changes of weight and inseparability of bodies, has been said to reflect the precarisation and flexibilisation of work in the 1960.

The relation between dance, performance and labour has also been approached more recently in contemporary art practices and in particular in relation to the contemporary artist's role as a worker. Bojana Kunst has written about artists working within the performing arts as a particular form of entrepreneur embodying the performativity of capital which she ties to new organizations of labour. Although looking at different time periods in art and dance they both argue the relation performance and labour at the level of representation of movements.

There are close connections between the terms performance and labour, especially within a cultural theoretical discourse in which certain post-Marxists readings of labour and performance are also included. But to grasp the relation between performance and labour in art at a more fundamental level, it is not enough, to look at representations of labour in performance nor at art labour as performance, i.e. to simply see performance and dance,

because of their focus on bodies, as capable of performing or representing different types of labour. What is needed is instead a consideration of the main mediating form, firstly of what productive, or more specifically abstract labour really is and secondly art's relation to such labour. What will be argued here is that abstract labour is a social form and that art, if it wants to interrupt this social form also need to do so at the level of social form, rather than at the level of representation.

## **On the Timeliness of the Thought of Rosa Luxemburg**

**Evelin Wittich**

This paper will discuss the resurgence of interest in Luxemburg's work in various parts of the world, especially Brazil, China, South Africa, India, and the U.S., in relationship to ongoing debates on globalization, national self-determination, and the effort to renew socialism through grassroots, non-hierarchical initiatives and forms of organization.

## **Proximity and Distance: 3 Encounters with the Art of Revolution**

**Paul Wood**

A curious feature about the hundredth anniversary of the Russian Revolution of 1917 has been quite widely noted: the feeling of simultaneous proximity and distance which it engenders. This is undoubtedly something to do with the course of events, both political and cultural, since the *annus mirabilis* of 1967/68, itself now half a century behind us. The field of modern art has not been exempt from experiencing drastic shifts in the legacy of the revolution during this period. I want to consider the relationship of art to the Russian Revolution at three key moments. First, as it informed the politicised version of Conceptual Art that emerged in the 1970s. Second, as it appeared in debates around 1990, animated by the pros and cons of 'postmodernism' and the end of the Cold War. And third, in more recent debates about the claim that there now exists a specific form of art defined as 'Contemporary' art, with an agenda distinct from and in key respects opposed to both modernist art and revolutionary politics. Clearly the changing impact of the October Revolution on the practice of art is too grand a subject for our present compass, even reduced to those bare bones. So I shall confine myself to three autobiographical, or at least semi-autobiographical, instances: an offshoot of the Art & Language tradition I was involved with in the seventies; a brief encounter I had with Alex Callinicos in the pages of the *Oxford Art Journal* in 1992; and a disagreement I had with Terry Smith in response to my book *Western Art and the Wider World*, a couple of years ago. My justification is that these snapshots can be read as symptoms of that dual relationship to the revolution which seems to be such a marked feature of its centenary.

## **Labour, Resistance, and Organisation in the Online Gig Economy**

**Jamie Woodcock (LSE)**

There are now an estimated 50 million digital workers that live across the globe, mainly working outsourced jobs that are mediated over platform or apps. The rise of this kind of

work has been captured with the phrase gig economy, implying that workers are choosing the flexibility of this mode of employment. These platforms vary greatly in size, scope, and locations involved, but many are bringing workers together in new ways. Behind the platforms, less is known about the labour process, conditions, and possibilities for resistance and organisation. So far, it appears that these workers lack the traditional routes to collectively bargain, negotiate pay/wages or conditions, particularly with employers who may be based in different countries. This paper addresses these challenges through the example of the Fairwork Foundation an initiative to assess gig economy platforms. It takes a similar starting point to the certification of Fair Trade products, providing standards for employment and comparing different companies. In particular, this paper examines the labour process and class composition of three different platforms types: location specific, microtask, and freelance/macrotask, drawing on the initial research from the Fairwork Foundation. This is followed by a discussion of the kinds of resistance that emerge from these different contexts, considering the possibilities for new forms of digital worker organisation.

## **Students as a Class? The University's Role in Class Struggle**

**Connor Woodman**

Against liberal discourses promoting the unity of the university community, this panel will explore how the university has its own internally conflictual class structure; and that the actors within this structure have relations to wider structures of class power outside of the university. Students are positioned in a conflict with the management of the university on three levels. The first level of antagonism concerns control over the university (manifested as political conflicts over the democratic representation and allocation of resources); the second level consists of social reproductive struggles against management as an arm of the state (manifested as conflicts over grants, fees and social provision); the third level is an anti-capitalist struggle to abolish management, viewed as a proxy for the state and capital. Academic and support staff fall on different sides of the management/student class division, according to their own internal divisions (hourly-paid tutors aligned with students, heads of department internalising managements interests). Student align with the external working class at the anti-capitalist level.

Complicating the analysis, some students find themselves in what Erik Olin Wright calls contradictory class positions: for example, having parents in the capitalist class they are opposing. This framework can be applied to analyse various student struggles and illuminate who students class allies and enemies are. Students were largely non-existent as a political force in Marx's time: their presence at the forefront of political movements during the last 50 years calls for a new analysis to better aid students strategic orientation.

## **Marxism in Malaysia: Prospects amidst Defeat**

**Jonathan Yong Tienxhi (London School of Economics and Political Science)**

While Marxists consider their ideology to be internationalist in scope and ambition, actual analysis of Marxism and politics is usually confined to Europe, the United States or Latin America. The influence of Marxism in Southeast Asia is comparatively rarely studied, and often confined to examining Burma and Indonesia, as seen in Frank N. Tragers Marxism in



Southeast Asia: A Study of Four Countries. This paper aims to rectify this gap in the literature, by engaging with a close study of the influence of Marxism on Malaysian politics. This involves retracing the history of the Left in Malaysia since the post-colonial era. Movements such as the pre-independence left wing coalition of Malay parties (Putera), the armed resistance of the Malayan Communist Party (MCP), as well as the contemporary organization of the Socialist Party of Malaysia. These movements and organizations are critically discussed in terms of their relationship to Marxism, and comparisons are made to traditional Western Marxism. The paper draws from firsthand accounts such as former MCP leader Chin Peng's *My Side of History*, as well as political discourse analysis to uncover the relationship of the state with Malaysian socialist struggle. It is argued that the ethnic, religious and linguistic divisions of Malaysia manifested unique challenges for the Left in mobilizing solidarity, and the state forces exploited these fractures to consolidate their own power. It is further argued that the vacuum created by the crushing of socialist politics since the 1970s have empowered the rise of Islamist and ethno-nationalist politics. This is seen in the crackdown on the student movements in Malaysian universities during the 1960s, as explored by Meredith Weiss's book *Student Activism in Malaysia: Crucible, Mirror, Sideshow*. It is hoped that these insights and analysis will provide broader lessons for Marxist movements which go beyond the internal politics of one country in Southeast Asia. The paper ends with an exploration of the forms in which an indigenous Marxist movement can arise in Malaysia, and why such a movement is imperative in breaking out of the current political stasis between ethnically based political parties.

## **Viewing the Myth of the Lazy Malay Through Neoliberal Lens: The Professional-Managerial Class in Malaysia**

**Jonathan Yong Tienxhi (London School of Economics and Political Science)**

In 1970, Syed Hussein Alatas published a critique of the function of colonial capitalism in perpetuating the notion that Malays, Filipinos and Javanese populations were inherently less industrious than the ethnic minorities that they administered power over. Since then, there has been little academic work done on how this racial project functions and sustains itself in contemporary Southeast Asia. This research project advances the argument of Alatas, by arguing that the politics surrounding the perpetuation of the myth of the lazy native is directly tied to the struggle over neoliberal capitalism. In this paper, I carry out semi-structured qualitative research interviews with fifteen Malaysian nationals in the United Kingdom and Malaysia on the issue of the racial stereotype of laziness which targets the Malay population. Firstly, I examine the impact of the Myth of the Lazy Native on Chinese and Malay Malaysians, and uncover how this racial stereotype is widely accepted and even internalized among contemporary Malaysians. Secondly, I draw from the qualitative interviews and political discourse analysis, and argue that the laziness that is typically associated and even sometimes embraced by segments of the Malay population can be understood as a means of resisting the encroachment of capitalist values on public and private spheres of life. Interviewees who accept the myth of the lazy native as empirical reality prioritize community cohesion and relationships over the advancement of business-like relations. Meanwhile, interviewees who are critical of the Malay population for being insufficiently industrious do so from the standpoint of prioritizing capitalist advancement, and invoke notions of meritocracy and competition. This is situated within a long history of struggle to impose capitalist ideology on Malaysian society from the ruling class, as embodied in the text of the former premier Mahathir Mohamed: *The Malay Dilemma*. This paper aims to remedy Marx's tendency to describe colonial societies in terms of ethnicity rather than class, by showing how class conflict remains central to understanding disputes

on racism and race in contemporary Malaysia. The implication of this is that a successful anti-racist strategy within Malaysia must also be an anti-capitalist one.

## **Workers Movements and Self-Organization Against Trade Unions and the State**

**Luciana Zorzoli (Instituto de Investigaciones en Humanidades y Ciencias Sociales - CONICET)**

It is commonplace to find references to the declining power of trade unions since the new neoliberal momentum imposes it will, increasingly transforming the world by reshaping labour process and industrial relations. Among the academic readings, we can find explanations that insist that the decline of unions has been a steady tendency associated with globalisation, while some optimistic views sustain that with the transformations new possibilities and new methods of confrontation have arisen (among others Wood, Meiksins, y Yates 1998; Moody 2001; Silver 2003; Kelly y Hamman 2009; Burgmann 2016). Between these views, the question about unions effectiveness to organise and to fight are rising globally, questioning if unions are still capable of adequately responding to the scale of problems working classes face. We will argue that in many of those readings trade unions are seen sympathetically and in an overly simplistic fashion overlooking the fact that as well as they represent groups of workers, they also play a key role in controlling their activities and in reproducing what is and what is not legitimate industrial action under 'normal' circumstances (Hyman 1975; Gramsci 1977; Kelly 1988; Haidar 2010; Atzeni 2016) This paper will readdress the questions about control and representation of workers in the trade union system bringing back several lessons for worker self-organization and for the debate about unions power or powerless states, especially in Latin America.